HEAVEN'S DOOR

Part Two
of
Tazkiyat an-Nufus wa Tarbiyyatuha kama Yuqarriruhu 'Ulama as-Salaf

The Purification of the Soul

according to the earliest sources

compiled from the works of
Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, and Abu Hamid al-Ghazali
collected and arranged by
Ahmad Farid

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the memory of Jihad Hozayien, born on the 5th Dhu'l-Qida 1405 / 23rd July 1985 and died on the 2nd Shawwal 1423 / 6th December 2002, may Allah have mercy on him.

(Do not suppose that those killed in the Way of Allah are dead.
No indeed! They are alive and well provided for
in the very presence of their Lord,
delighting in the favour Allah has bestowed on them,
rejoicing over those they left behind
who have not yet joined them,
feeling no fear and knowing no sorrow,
rejoicing in blessings and favour from Allah
and that Allah does not let the wage
of the muminun go to waste.)(3: 169-171)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

INTRODUCTION

This book comprises the second part of the English translation of *Tazkiyat an-Nufus wa Tarbiyyatuha kama Yuqarriruhu 'Mama as-Salaf* compiled by Ahmed Farid, the first part of which has already been published under the title *The Purification of the Soul.* Both books are concerned with assisting the traveller in life to pass smoothly through this world and safely into the next — and should be read together.

Whereas *The Purification of the Soul* is concerned primarily with the science of awakening and purifying the heart — on which good inward intentions depend, *Heaven's Door* is concerned firstly, with outward action — which is the manifestation and outward expression of inward intention, and secondly, with the consequences of inward intention and outward action — which we meet both in this life and after we have died.

Actions are known and evaluated by the intentions behind them and intentions are dependant on knowledge. The actions of a wise man are very different to those of an ignorant fool, even if outwardly they may appear to be similar. Good actions are dependant on a clean heart, and it is only once the heart has been purified that a person can concern themselves with guiding the actions of others. If the teacher's heart is not sound, how can the teacher's actions mirror the teacher's words — and how can he or she teach others?

As we have seen in *The Purification of the Soul*, this soundness of the heart depends largely on being detached from the world, since desire for the world is what distracts the self and gives shaytan the opportunity to cause mischief.

Desire for this world and what it contains can possess the self and blind the heart, making this world appear to be all there is, and the next world just a dream or a fairy tale and Allah non-existent. If this is your view of existence, then you are asleep and *shaytan* has you where he wants.

Detachment from this world depends largely on knowledge of the next world — and on awareness that wherever you are, Allah is present. If this is your view of existence, then you are awake and *shaytan* has no power over you — and it is this world which seems like a dream.

Ahmad ibn Amir, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "You have four enemies :

- Shaytan : and his weapons are a full belly, and his prison is hunger.
- Desire : and its weapon is speech, and it is imprisoned by silence.
- This world : whose weapon is to meet people, and it is imprisoned by retreat.

- The self : whose weapon is sleep, and it is imprisoned by sleeplessness."[1]

It has been related by *sayyedina* 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, that once when he visited the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who was lying on a mat in his small room, he was moved to tears when he saw how little the Prophet possessed.

When the Prophet asked him why he was weeping, *sayyedina* 'Umar replied, 'O Messenger of Allah, how can I not cry? This mat has left marks on your sides and I can only see what I have seen of your stores. Caesar and Chosroes are leading their lives of plenty, while you are the Messenger of Allah, His Chosen One — and look what you have!'

'Ibn al-Khattab,' he answered, 'isn't it enough for you that for us there is the next world, and for them there is this world?'[2]

When the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was dying, he was given the choice of either living longer or returning to His Lord. He chose the Highest Company. He said, "Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, said, 'If My slave longs to meet Me, I long to meet him, and if he is averse to meeting Me, I am averse to meeting him.'"[3]

Heaven's Door is for those who are aware that time is passing, that this world is leaving them, that the next world is approaching them, and that Allah is Real. It is for those who would hate to be in the Fire and who long to be in the Garden. It is for those who find themselves knocking on heaven's door.

The Messenger of Allah, our master Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to say, when he rose for prayer in the middle of the night, "Oh Allah, praise belongs to You. You are the light of the heavens and the earth and praise belongs to You. You are the Sustainer of the heavens and the earth and praise belongs to You. You are the Lord of the heavens and the earth and whoever is in them. You are the Truth and Your words are true. Your promise is true, and the meeting with You is true. The Garden is true and the Fire is true and the Hour is true. Oh Allah, I submit to You and I accept You and I trust in You and I turn to You and I argue by You and I summon to You for judgement. Forgive me what I have sent before me and what I have left behind, what I have kept secret and what I have proclaimed. You are my god — there is no god but You."[4]

Death is a doorway through which every one of us must pass. Both before and beyond this doorway there are many doorways through which we must pass if we are to find ourselves finally entering through one of the eight gates which are heaven's door.

It is related that Ibn 'Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said:

"The Gardens have eight gates of gold inlaid with jewels:

"Written on the first gate is *La ilaha il'Allah, Muhammad arRasulu'llah — There is no god only Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.* It is the gate of the Prophets, Messengers, Martyrs and the Generous.

"The second gate is the gate of those who prayed, who were excellent in *wudu* and the basic elements of the prayer.

"The third gate is that of those who gave *Zakat* cheerfully.

"The fourth gate is that of those who commanded good and forbade the reprehensible.

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[1] *The Basic Research* by Shaykh Ahmad ibn 'Ajiba, p.219
[2] *The Wives of the Prophet* by Ahmad Thomson, p. 35
[3] *Al-Muwatta'* Imam Malik, 16.16.51
[4] *Al-Muwatta'* Imam Malik, 15.8.34

"The fifth gate is the gate of those who rooted out their appetites and prevented passions.

"The sixth gate is the gate of those who did *Hajj* and *'Umra.* "The seventh gate is the gate of those who fought *Jihad.*

"The eighth gate is the gate of those who turned their eyes from *haram* things and did good actions of respect to parents, relatives and others.

"There are eight Gardens:

"The first is the Abode of Majesty, and it is of white pearl.

"The second is the Abode of Peace, and it is of red ruby.

"The third is the Abode of Shelter, and it is of green chrysolite.

"The fourth is the Garden of Immortality, and it is of red and yellow coral.

"The fifth is the Garden of Bliss, and it is of white silver.

"The sixth is the Garden of Firdaws, and it is of red gold.

"The seventh is the Garden of 'Adn, and it is of white pearl.

"The eighth is the Abode of Rest, and it is of red gold, and it is the dome of the Gardens, and it is raised over the Gardens. It has two gates, and the two leaves are of gold and silver. Between each of the two leaves is what is between the heaven and earth. It is built of gold and silver bricks. Its mud is musk and its earth is amber and its straw is saffron. Its castles are of pearl and its rooms are of ruby. Its doors are of jewels, and in it are rivers. There is the River of Mercy which flows in all the Gardens, and its pebbles are pearls, with a white brighter than snow, and it is sweeter than honey. In it is the River of Kawthar (Abundance), and it is the river of our Prophet Muhammad, blessings and peace be upon him. Its trees are pearls and rubies. In it is the River of Kafur (Camphor), and the River of Tasnim (Water Coming From Above), and the river of Salsabil (Easy to Swallow), and the River of ar-Rahiq al-Maktum (Sealed Nectar). Beyond that are rivers whose number is not known."[5]

Yahya related to me from Malik from Ibn Shihab from Humayd ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf from Abu Hurayra that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Whoever hands over two of any type of property in the way of Allah is called to the Garden, with the words, 'O slave of Allah! This is good!' Whoever is among the people of prayer is called from the Gate of Prayer. Whoever is among the people of *jihad* is called from the Gate of *Jihad.* Whoever is among the people of *sadaqa* is called from the Gate of *Sadaqa.* Whoever is among the people of fasting is called from the Gate of the Well-Watered (Bab ar-Rayyan)."

Abu Bakr as-Siddiq said, "O Messenger of Allah! Is it absolutely necessary that one be called from one of these gates? Can someone be called from all of these gates?" He replied, "Yes, and I hope you are among them."[6]

May you be one of those who may pass through whichever gate you choose!

Ahmad Thomson

London 1424/2003

[5] *Daqa'iqu'l-akhbar fi Dhikri'l-Jannati wa'n-Nar*by Imam 'Abd ar-Rahim ibn Ahmad al-Qadi, pp. 125-6
[6] *Al-Muwatta'* Imam Malik, 21.19.49

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

All praise is for Allah. We praise Him and seek His assistance. We ask for His forgiveness and take refuge in Him from the evil within ourselves and from the evil of our deeds. He whom Allah guides will never be diverted, and whomever He sends astray will never find his way. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, Alone — He has no partner — and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger, may Your blessings and peace be on him and on his Family and on his Companions.

One of the most important tasks for which the Prophet of this nation, Muhammad, was sent was the purification of the soul. Allah says, speaking of this mission,

(It is He who raised up among the unlettered people
a Messenger from them, to recite His Signs to them and purify them
and teach them the Book and the Wisdom,
even though before that they were clearly misguided.) (62: 2)

So whoever truly hopes for Allah and the Last Day should have a special interest in the purification of his own soul, for Allah has linked the success of His servant with the purity of his soul — after making eleven consecutive oaths. There is not to be found in the Qur'an another oath such as this. Allah says:

(By the sun and its morning brightness,
and the moon when it follows it,
and the day when it displays it,
and the night when it conceals it
and the sky and what erected it
and the earth and what extended it,
and the self and what proportioned it
and inspired it with depravity or taqwa,
he who purifies it has succeeded,
he who covers it up has failed.) (91: 1-10)

The word *tazkia* means to purify or to cleanse; the word *zakat* comes from the same root, since *zakat* purifies wealth by the recognition of Allah's right over a portion of it.

It has now become difficult for us to benefit directly from the books of *raqa'iq* (books on subjects which affect the emotions) written by the first generations of Muslim scholars. Most of these are large books comprising many volumes and are difficult for most Muslims to have access to; in addition to this they frequently contain weak and fabricated reports.

Thus we have set out to compile a collection of the most reliable reports, which have come to us from some of the scholars whose expertise lay in the field of *da'wa:* Imam Shamsudin Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, and Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali.

It is our sincere desire that this book will be a useful resource and ultimately prove to be of benefit on the Day when neither money nor children will be of benefit — for none will benefit, except for those who come with a pure heart.

All Praise is for Allah and all Power is His.
He is our Lord and to Him is the end of all journeys.

(Among the muminun there are men who have been true
to the contract they made with Allah.
Some of them have fulfilled their pact by death
and some are still waiting to do so,
not having changed in any way at all.) (33.23)

ONE

ENJOINING GOOD AND FORBIDDING EVIL

Enjoining good and forbidding evil, *amr bi'l-ma'ruf wa'n-nahiy an al-munkar*, is the pivot and most important principle in Islam and it is the main reason why Allah sent His Prophets and Messengers to His creatures. If this principle is not implemented and put into practice, then prophethood is ineffective, the *deen* fades away, misguidance, corruption and ignorance prevail, civilizations decline, and nations are destroyed.

Whenever this principle has been extinguished, people follow their desires and whims, ignore their Lord, and live like animals — and then you can hardly find anyone who adheres to the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil, even though the reward of putting it into practice is great in the sight of Allah.

The Obligation to Enjoin Good and Forbid Evil

Allah says:

(Let there be a community among you
who call to the good,
and enjoin the right,
and forbid the wrong.
They are the ones who have success.) (3: 104)

Allah also says:

(They are not all the same.
There is a community among the People of the Book
who are upright.
They recite Allah's Signs throughout the night,
and they prostrate.
They have iman in Allah and the Last Day,
and enjoin the right
and forbid the wrong,
and compete in doing good.
They are among the salihun.) (3: 113-114)

In the above verse, Allah does not accept their righteousness just by their believing in Allah and the Last Day, until He has added to it the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil.

In another verse, Allah says:

(The men and women of the muminun
are friends of one another.
They command what is right
and forbid what is wrong.) (9: 72)

Here Allah refers to the believers as those who enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil — therefore, anyone who forsakes this pillar is excluded from the ranks of the believers.

In another verse, Allah has cursed some of the tribe of Israel for abandoning the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil. He says:

> ***(Those among the tribe of Israel who were kafir***
> ***were cursed on the tongue of Dawud***
> ***and that of 'Isa, son of Maryam.***
> ***That is because they rebelled***
> ***and overstepped the limits.***
> ***They would not restrain one another***
> ***from any of the wrong things that they did.***
> ***How evil were the things they used to do!) (5: 78-79)***

Whereas, Allah has praised those who have implemented the principle of enjoining good and forbidding evil. He says:

> ***(You are the best nation ever to be produced before mankind.***
> ***You enjoin the right,***
> ***forbid the wrong***
> ***and have iman in Allah.) (3: 110)***

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say, 'He who amongst you sees something objectionable should change it with the help of his hand; and if he does not have the strength to do it, then he should reject it with his tongue; and if he does not have the strength to do it, then he should reject it in his heart — and that is the least of faith."[7]

This *hadith* shows that rejecting evil should be done according to your strength and ability, but should be done at least with your heart, because if your heart does not deny evil, this means that your *iman* is gone. Therefore you must change evil with your hand and tongue if you are able to do so, but in any event you must reject it with your heart — and this is an obligation and the least of faith — otherwise Allah's punishment will come.

Hudhaifah related that the Prophet A said, "By Him in Whose hand my soul is, you must enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, or Allah will certainly soon send punishment from Him to you. Then you will make supplication and not receive any answer."[8]

An-Nu'man Ibn Bashir related that the Prophet said, "The metaphor of a person who complies with Allah's orders and prohibitions in comparison to those who violate them is like the metaphor of some people who drew lots for their seats in a boat. Some of them were given seats on the upper deck, and the others on the lower deck. When those on the lower deck needed water, they would have had to go up to fetch the water, so they said, 'Let us make a hole in our part of the ship and save those who are above us from our troubling them.' If the people on the upper deck let the others do what they suggested, all the people in the boat would be destroyed, but if they prevented them, both groups would be safe."[9]

Abdullah Ibn Mas'oud related that the Prophet said, "There was never a Prophet sent before me by Allah to his nation who did not have among his people disciples and companions who followed his ways and obeyed his command. Then after them came their successors who said what they did not do, and did what they were not commanded to do. Whoever strove against them with his hand was a believer; whoever strove against them with his tongue was a believer; and whoever strove against them with his heart was a believer; and beyond that

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[7] Muslim, 2/22-25; At-Tirmidhi, 9/18-19; Abu Dawud, 1128; An-Nasa'i', 8/111; Ibn Majah, 4013.
[8] At-Tirmidhi, 9/17; classified as *hasan.* Albani also classifies it as *hasan.*
[9] Al-Bukhari, 5 / 132; At-Tirmidhi, 9/19.

there was no faith, not even as much as a mustard seed."[10]

Abu Bakr related that the Prophet said, "If acts of disobedience occur among any people and they do not change them even though they are able to do so, Allah will soon punish them all."[11]

Guidelines on Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

Knowledge

In order to enjoin good and forbid evil, you must know the principles governing them and how to distinguish between them. Actions will not be any good if they are not done with full knowledge and wisdom. `Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz said, "Whoever worships Allah without knowledge, will do more damage than what he puts right."

Mu'adh Ibn Jabal said: "Knowledge should precede action, because if action and intention are done without knowledge, then ignorance, misguidance and desires will prevail."

So if a believer knows that by forbidding a particular evil, his action will lead to a greater evil, then he should not forbid that evil in the first place; or if his action will lead to the elimination of what is of greater benefit to the Muslims, then again, he should not forbid that evil.

The Prophet t did not kill Abdullah Ibn Ubai Ibn Salul, the leader of the hypocrites, and his friends, because they enjoyed significant support from among their tribes. So the Prophet avoided killing Abdullah Ibn Ubai Ibn Salul, because people might think that he was killing his companions, and also because Abdullah Ibn Ubai Ibn Salul's tribe might have risen up against the Prophet , and sought to avenge their leader's death.

Accordingly, you must consider the issues of *maslaha* and *mafsada*[12] before embarking on enjoining good and forbidding evil.

Gentleness

You should be kind and gentle in enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. The Prophet A said, "Be gentle, for if gentleness is present in anything, it adorns it - and if it is absent from anything, it damages it."[13] The Prophet also said, "Allah it likes gentleness in all matters and rewards it more than He rewards harshness."[14] Jarir related, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say, "Whoever is deprived of gentleness is deprived of good."[15]

Sufyan ath-Thawri said, "Only he who has the following qualities can enjoin good and forbid evil: he should be gentle and just and he should know the principles of enjoining good and forbidding evil."

Patience

Whoever intends to enjoin good and forbid evil must have patience in the face of adversities

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[10] Muslim, 2/27.
[11] Abu Dawud, 4316; Ibn Majah, 4005; Ahmed, 1/16.
[12] *maslaha* (plural: *masa'lih):* considerations of public interest, human welfare, utility, and human good. Ash-Sha'tibi said: "What concerns the subsistence of human life, the wholeness of his way of life, and the acquiring of what man's emotional and intellectual faculties require of him in their absolute sense."
mafsada (plural: *mafa'sid):* Evil, namely anything which violates *addaruriyat al-khamsa,* the five essential values of *deen,* life, intellect, lineage and property; the opposite of *maslaha.*
[13] Muslim, 16/146; Abu Dawud, 2461; Ahmed, 6/58.
[14] Al-Bukhari, 12/280; Muslim, 16/146.
[15] Muslim, 16/145.

and hard times. He should know, beforehand, that he will be subjected to tribulation, just as Luqman told his son:

(My son, establish salat,
and command what is right
and forbid what is wrong
and be steadfast in the face of all that happens to you.
That is certainly the most resolute course to follow.) (31: 16)

Allah also ordered His Messenger to be patient:

(You who are enveloped in your cloak!
Arise and warn!
Magnify your Lord. Purify your clothes. Shun all filth.
Do not give out of a desire for gain.
Be steadfast for your Lord.) (74: 1-7)

And:

(Be steadfast in the face of what they say
and cut yourself off from them -
but courteously.) (73: 9)

So you must have three qualities: knowledge, gentleness and patience; knowledge before enjoining good and forbidding evil, gentleness in carrying this out, and patience after it.

Reasons for Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

There are many incentives which encourage you to enjoin good and forbid evil: to receive a reward from Allah to avoid His punishment, to defend Allah's commands and His *Shari'a,* to give sincere advice to the believers and to save them from Allah's anger and punishment both in this world and in the next, to glorify Allah it by implementing His orders, by obeying Him, by thanking and praising Him and by expending your life and wealth in His way.

TWO

FIGHTING IN THE WAY OF ALLAH

The Merits of Fighting in the Way of Allah

From the Qur'an

Allah says:

(Fighting is prescribed for you even if it is hateful to you.
It may be that you hate something
when it is good for you
and it may be that you love something
when it is bad for you.
Allah knows and you do not know.) (2: 214)

He also says:

(Go out to fight, whatever your circumstances or desires,
and do jihad with your wealth and yourselves
in the Way of Allah.
That is better for you if you only knew.) (9: 41)

He says:

(Allah has bought from the muminun
their selves and their wealth
in return for the Garden.
They fight in the Way of Allah
and they kill and are killed.) (9: 112)

Allah it says:

(Those muminun who stay behind —
other than those forced to by necessity —
are not the same as those who do jihad in the Way of Allah,
sacrificing their wealth and themselves.
Allah has given those who do jihad
with their wealth and themselves
a higher rank than those who stay behind.
Allah has promised the Best to both,
but Allah has preferred those who do jihad
over those who stay behind
by an immense reward:
high ranks conferred by Him
as well as forgiveness and mercy.
Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.) (4:94-95)

From the Ahadith

Abu Hurairah related that a man came to the Messenger of Allah and said, "Tell me what

action is equal to doing *jihad."* He replied, "I do not know of such an action." Then he added, 'Could you, as long as a Muslim fighter is on the battlefield, enter your mosque and perform prayers without stopping and fast without breaking your fast?" The man said, "Who could do that?" Abu Hurairah added, "The *mujahid* is rewarded even for the steps of his horse as it wanders about tethered on a long rope."[16]

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri related that a Bedouin came to the Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Who is the best of mankind?" The Prophet said, "A man who fights in the Way of Allah with his life and his property, and also a man who lives beside a mountain path among the mountain paths in order to worship his Lord and safeguard people from his evil."[17]

Anas Ibn Malik related that the Prophet said: "A morning's journey or an afternoon's journey in the Way of Allah is better than the whole world and what is in it."[18]

Salman al-Farsi related that he heard the Prophet say, "Keeping watch for a day and a night (during *jihad)* is better than fasting for a whole month and standing in prayer every night. If a person dies (while doing this), it will be as if his action continues and he will go on receiving his reward for it perpetually and he will be saved from the punishment of the grave."[19]

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said: "Whoever dies without having fought in the Way of Allah and without having expressed any desire for *jihad* has died the death of a hypocrite."[20]

Abu Hurairah related that he heard the Prophet say, "The example of a *mujahid* in the Way of Allah - and Allah knows best who really strives in His Way - is like a person who fasts and prays continuously. Allah guarantees that He will admit the *mujahid* in His Way into Paradise if he is killed, or else He will return him safely to his home with rewards and booty."[21]

Ibn Umar related that the Prophet said, "Whenever you enter into a loan transaction and hold on to the tails of your oxen and are content with being a farmer and give up *jihad* in the Way of Allah, then Allah will let disgrace prevail over you and He will not withdraw it until you return to your *deen."*[22]

The Merits of Martyrdom in the Way of Allah

Anas related that the Prophet said, "Nobody who dies and finds good from Allah (in the *akhira)* wants to return to this world - even if he were to be given the whole world and what is in it - except for a martyr who, on seeing the excellence of being a martyr, wants to come back to this world and be killed again (in the Way of Allah)."[23]

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "By Him in Whose hand my soul is, I would like to fight *jihad* in the Way of Allah and be killed, and then fight *jihad* in the Way of Allah and be killed, and then fight *jihad* in the Way of Allah and be killed."[24]

'Abdullah Ibn Amr Ibn al-'As related that the Prophet said, "All the wrong actions of a *shahid* are forgiven except debt."[25]

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[16] Al-Bukhari, 6/4; Muslim, 13/24-25.
[17] Al-Bukhari, 6/ 6; Muslim, 13 /33-34.
[18] Al-Bukhari, 6/13; Muslim, 13/ 27.
[19] Muslim, 13/61; at-Tirmidhi, 7/162; an-Nasa'i', 6/39.
[20] Muslim, 13/56; Abu Dawud, 2485; an-Nasa'i', 6/8.
[21] Al-Bukhari, 6/ 6; Muslim, 13 /20; an-Nasa'i, 6/ 20; Imam Malik's *Al-Muwatta'*, 1/443-444.
[22] Abu Dawud, 3445.
[23] Al-Bukhari, 6/ 32; Muslim, 13/ 24; at-Tirmidhi, 7/161.
[24] Al-Bukhari, 6/16; Muslim, 13/20.
[25] Muslim, 13 /30.

For the wrong actions of a martyr to be forgiven, his *jihad* should be sincerely in the Way of Allah, seeking the reward of Allah.

Abu Qatadah related that the Messenger of Allah stood up among his companions and gave a talk in which he told them that *jihad* in the Way of Allah and trust in Allah are the most excellent of actions. A man stood up and said, "Messenger of Allah, do you think that if I am killed in the Way of Allah all my wrong actions will be wiped out for me?" The Messenger of Allah replied, "Yes, if you are killed in the Way of Allah and you were always steadfast and sincere and you always fought facing the enemy and never turned your back on him." Then he added, 'What did you just say?" The man asked, "Do you think that if I am killed in the Way of Allah all my wrong actions will be wiped out for me?" The Messenger of Allah said, "Yes, if you were steadfast and sincere and always fought facing the enemy and never turned your back on him - except for debt. *Jibril* has just told me this."[26]

Al-Miqdam Ibn Ma'd Yakrib related that the Prophet said, "The martyr receives six good things from Allah: he is forgiven at the first shedding of his blood; he is shown his abode in Paradise; he is preserved from the punishment in the grave; he is kept safe from the Greatest Terror; he has placed on his head a crown of honour, a ruby of which is better than the world and what it contains; he is married to seventy-two wives of the maidens with large dark eyes; and he is made intercessor for seventy of his relatives."[27]

A man asked the Prophet "O Messenger of Allah! Why is it that all the believers are tried in their graves except the martyr?" The Prophet replied: "The head of the martyr is protected by the gleam of swords."[28]

The Jihad of the Companions

Anas related, "My uncle Anas Ibn An-Nadr missed the battle of *Badr.* He said, 'O Messenger of Allah! I missed the first battle you fought against the *kafirun* but if Allah gives me a chance to fight the *kafirun,* there is no doubt that Allah will see how (bravely) I will fight.' On the day of *Uhud* when the Muslims turned their backs and fled, he said, '0 Allah! I apologise to You for what they have done, and I denounce what these (i.e. the *kafirun)* have done.' Then he advanced and Sa'd Ibn Muadh met him. He said, 'O Sa'd Ibn Muadh! By the Lord of An-Nadr, Paradise! I can smell its scent coming out from *Uhud.'* Later on Sa'd said, 'O Messenger of Allah! I could not have done what he (Anas Ibn An-Nadr) did. We found his dead body with more than eighty sword and arrow wounds. His body was mutilated so badly that no one except his sister could recognise him, by his fingers.' Anas added, 'We used to think that the following verse was revealed concerning him and other men like him:

(Among the muminun there are men who have been true
to the contract they made with Allah.
Some of them have fulfilled their pact by death
and some are still waiting to do so,
not having changed in any way at all.) (33.23)'"[29]

Abu Hurairah, related, "The Messenger of Allah and his Companions made their way towards *Badr* and arrived there well before the *kafirun* (of Makkah). When the *kafirun* arrived there, the Messenger of Allah said, 'None of you should step forward to do anything unless I am ahead of him.' As the *kafirun* advanced, the Messenger of Allah said, 'Prepare to enter

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[26] Muslim, 18/4646.
[27] At-Tirmidhi, 7/161; Ibn Majah, 2799; Imam Ahmed, 4 /131.
[28] An-Nisa'i, 4/99.
[29] Al-Bukhari, 7/354-355; Muslim, 13/47-48; At-Tirmidhi, 12/80-81.

Paradise, which is as wide as the heavens and the earth.' Umair Ibn al-Humam al-Ansari said, 'Messenger of Allah, is Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth?' He A answered, 'Yes.' Umair exclaimed, 'My goodness!' The Messenger of Allah asked him, 'What made you say that?'

He replied, 'O Messenger of Allah, nothing but the desire to be one of its residents.' He said: 'You will be one of its residents.' Umair took some dates from his bag and began to eat them. Then he said, 'If I were to live until I had eaten all of these dates of mine, my life would be too long.' He threw away all the dates he had with him and fought the enemy until he was killed."[30]

Abu Imran said, "We set out on an expedition from Madina intending to attack Constantinople. Abd'ur-Rahman Ibn Khalid Ibn al-Walid was the leader of our army. The Romans had their backs to the walls of the city. One of our men launched an attack against the enemy. Some of the men shouted, 'Stop! Stop! There is no god but Allah. He is putting himself in danger!'

"Abu Ayyub said, 'The following verse was revealed about us, the group of the *Ansar,* when Allah helped His Prophet and gave Islam the upper hand, and we thought, "Come on then! Let us stay with our property and improve it." Then Allah, the Exalted, revealed:

(Spend in the Way of Allah.
Do not cast yourselves into destruction.) (2: 194)

So, the meaning of casting ourselves into destruction was if we had stayed with our property and had busied ourselves with improving it and had abandoned fighting'"

Abu Imran continued: "Abu Ayyub continued to strive in the Way of Allah until he (died and) was buried in Constantinople."[31]

[30] Muslim, 13/45-46.
[31] Abu Dawud, 2506.

THREE

REMEMBERING DEATH

Praise belongs to Allah Who bows the necks of tyrants and oppressors by inflicting death on them. Their hearts repeatedly refuse to remember death, but when death comes to them they are thrown into their holes, taken from their palaces to their tombs, from light into darkness, from the pleasures of the world and the beauty of women to the pain of worms and vermin, from their enjoyment of food and drink to dirt and dust, from the love and companionship of their family to solitude and loneliness, from the comfort of their beds to the discomfort of the grave. They cannot escape from their miserable destiny — can you see a single one of them or even hear the slightest sound?

Glory be to Allah! He has power over all His creatures who shall all die — except Him. Allah humiliates evildoers and redeems righteous people through death and makes the grave a place of constriction for wrongdoers and sinners until the Day of Judgement, when they shall all meet Him and He will judge between them. He A is the Benefactor and the Avenger and all Praise is due to Him — and may His peace and blessings be on His Messenger, Muhammad It who came with clear miracles and proofs.

So is it not enough for whoever has death for a destiny, dust for a bed, worms for companions, *Munkar* and *Nakir* for visitors, the grave for a shelter, the Day of Judgement for an appointed time and either Paradise or Hell as a final dwelling place, to give much thought and consideration to all of this and prepare for it?

Constant Remembrance of Death

The heart of whoever is drowned in the pleasures of this world and its attractions is distracted from remembering death — and if someone mentions death to him, he hates it and runs away from it. As regards such people, Allah says:

> ***(Say: 'Death from which you are fleeing***
> ***will certainly catch up with you.***
> ***Then you will be returned***
> ***to the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible***
> ***and He will inform you about what you did.') (62: 8)***

In regard to remembering death, people are divided into three categories:

Firstly, there is the one who is preoccupied with worldly desires and pleasures and who does not reflect on death. If he does happen to think of it, then he only feels sorry about the life which he will have to leave behind. For such a person, remembering death veils him from Allah.

Secondly, there is the one who turns in repentance and who is mindful of death all the time. His heart experiences fear of Allah and so his turning in repentance has good results. Perhaps such a person is troubled by death out of fear that it will take him by surprise before he has repented sincerely. His dislike of death is justified, because he is one of those who wish to delay the meeting with their Lord until they are fully prepared for that meeting. In spite of this, one of the main characteristics of the person who turns in repentance is that he is always ready to meet death. If not, he would be among those who are preoccupied with the pleasures

of this world.

Thirdly, there is the one who is an *'arif* — who is in constant remembrance of Allah. He longs to meet his Lord. Such a person waits for death impatiently. He wants to be free of the life of this world and to be near his Lord.

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "Constantly remember death — which brings all pleasures to an end."[32]

'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar related that the Prophet said, "Hearts grow rusty just as iron does when it is exposed to water." On being asked what keeps them clean he replied, "Much remembrance of death and recitation of the Qur'an."[33]

'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar related, "I was with the Prophet t and a man of the *Ansar* asked him, 'Who are the most clever and generous of people?' The Prophet replied, 'The most clever and generous of people are those who constantly remember death and who are prepared for it — they earn the honour of this world and nobility in the *akhira.'"*[34]

Allah it has made death one of the worst disasters. He describes it as a misfortune in the Qur'an:

(... if you are travelling when the misfortune of death occurs,) (5: 106)

Death is described as a misfortune because the one who dies is suddenly moved from one abode to another and from one state to another. However, worse than death itself is being negligent of it — not being constantly mindful of it and not preparing for it.

There is a consensus among the majority of our scholars that death in itself is sufficient to act as a reminder and a warning. In *Mukhtasar at-Tadhkira,* the author states, "You should all know that the heart is softened, Allah willing, by many things: visiting the graves, going to gatherings of knowledgeable and righteous people, listening to the stories of previous nations and learning lessons from them, and remembering death — which brings all pleasures to an end, divides families and friends and separates children from their parents.

"One of the benefits of remembering death is that it prevents you from doing wrong actions and prohibited deeds and it helps you to relinquish the pleasures of this world and to attach no importance to its disasters.

"Another example of what softens the heart is to be with people when they are dying and to witness the agony of their death and their worries and their struggle. Whoever is not moved by such a disturbing situation will not be helped by any advice."

Al-Hasan al-Basri said, "Death exposes the life of this world for what it is by leaving no moment of joy to sensible people. Whenever a servant turns to the remembrance of Allah, the life of this world and everything in it becomes insignificant in his eyes."

Ibn Muti' was looking at his house one day and was captivated by its beauty. Then he cried out and said, "By Allah! If it were not for death, I would have been happy here, and if it were not for the confinement of the grave to which we are heading, we would have been content with the life of this world."

The Misfortune of Death

Death is a misfortune — as Allah says,

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[32] At-Tirmidhi, 9/187; An-Nasa'i, 4/4; Ibn Majah, 4258; Al-Hakim: 4/321.
[33] Transmitted by at-Tirmidhi and al-Bayhaqi in *Sh'ab al-Iman.*
[34] Ibn Majah, 4259.

(... if you are travelling when the misfortune of death occurs,) (5: 106)

This misfortune in itself contains three further tribulations: the agony of death, seeing the angel or angels of death, and the fear of a bad end and the punishment of the evil-doers in the Fire of Hell.

The Agony of Death

The (prospect of the) agony of death should cause sufficient worry, trouble and concern to interrupt the pleasures of the servant and his enjoyment of them. He should reflect deeply about it and be prepared for that time — because death can take his life at any moment. Death takes away a servant's soul gradually and so each part of the body feels the agony of death — until it reaches the throat. Then the dying person is cut off from the life of this world, the gate of repentance is shut and he is overwhelmed by grief and remorse.

Mujahid interpreted the following verse:

(There is no tawba for people who persist in doing evil
until death comes to them
and who then say, 'Now I make tawba.') (4: 18)

as follows: "When the dying person sees the angels of death and is confronted with death, he repents — but that sort of repentance is no good."

Ibn 'Umar related that the Prophet said, "Allah accepts the repentance of His servant up until his death-rattle begins."[35]

The Death of the Prophet Muhammad

'A'isha, may Allah be pleased with her, said, "There was a leather or wooden container full of water close to the Messenger of Allah (when he was dying). He would dip his hand into the water and wipe his face with it, saying, 'None has the right to be worshipped except Allah! Death makes you so dazed.' Then he raised his hand and began repeating, 'The Highest Company,' until he expired and his hand dropped down."[36]

Seeing the Angel or Angels of Death

The Qur'an states that it is Allah Who is in charge of taking away life. He says:

(Allah takes back people's selves when their death arrives.)(39: 39)

Sometimes, it states that it is the Angel of Death who takes away the soul. Allah says:

(Say: 'The Angel of Death,
who has been given charge of you,
will take you back
then you will be sent back to your Lord.') (32: 11)

Sometimes, it states that it is several angels who are put in charge. Allah says:

(He is the Absolute Master over His slaves.
He sends angels to watch over you.
Then when death comes to one of you,
Our messengers take him,
and they do not fail in their task.) (6: 62)

In reality, it is Allah Who takes the souls at the time of death.

[35] At-Tirmidhi, 13/58, who classified it as *hasan gharib;* Ahmed, 6160; Ibn Majah, 4253; Al-Hakim, 4/257.
[36] Al-Bukhari, 8/144.

Al-Kulabi said: "The Angel of Death takes away the soul and gives it to the angels of mercy if the soul is that of a believer, and to the angels of punishment if the soul is that of an unbeliever."

Imam Ahmed related on the authority of Al-Bara' Ibn Azib "We went out with the Messenger of Allah accompanying the bier of a man of the *Ansar*. When we reached his grave, it had not yet been dug. So the Messenger of Allah sat down and we also sat down around him as if birds were perched on our heads. He had in his hand a stick with which he was scratching the ground. Then he raised his head and said: 'Seek refuge with Allah from the punishment of the grave. He repeated this twice or thrice.'"

The version of Jabir adds here: "Just as the deceased hears the sound of their footsteps as they are leaving, he is asked: 'O so and so, who is your Lord, what is your *deen,* and who is your Prophet?"

Hannad's version states: "Two angels will come to him and make him sit up and ask him, 'Who is your Lord?' He will reply, 'My Lord is Allah.' They will ask him, 'What is your *deen?'* He will reply, 'My *deen* is Islam.' They will ask him, 'What do you think about the man who was sent on a mission among you?' He will reply, 'He is the Messenger of Allah.' They will ask, 'Who made you aware of this?' He will reply, 'I read the Book of Allah and believed it and considered it true.'"

This is confirmed by the words of Allah:

> ***(Allah makes those who have iman firm***
> ***with the Firm Word***
> ***in the life of the dunya and the akhira.) (14: 29)***

The agreed version continues: "Then a crier will call from Heaven, 'My servant has spoken the truth, so spread a bed for him from Paradise, clothe him from Paradise, and open a door for him into Paradise.' So some of its air and perfume will come to him, and space will be made for him as far as the eye can see."

He also describes the death of the *kafir* and says: "His spirit will be restored to his body and two angels will come to him and make him sit up and ask him, 'Who is your Lord?' He will reply, 'Alas, alas! I do not know.' They will ask him, 'What is your *deen?'* He will reply, 'Alas, alas! I do not know.' They will ask, 'Who was the man who was sent on a mission among you?' He will reply, 'Alas, alas! I do not know.' Then a crier will call from Heaven, 'He has lied, so spread a bed for him from Hell, clothe him from Hell, and open a door for him into Hell.' Then some of its heat and pestilential wind will come to him, and his grave will be compressed so that his ribs are crushed together."

Jabir's version adds: "Then someone who is blind and dumb will be put in charge of him. He will have such a sledge-hammer that if a mountain were struck with it, it would become dust. He will give him a blow with it, which will be heard by everything between the east and the west, except by men and jinn, and he will become dust. Then his spirit will be restored to him."[37]

The Fear of a Bad End
and the Punishment of the Evil-Doers in the Fire of Hell

Fear of a bad end even breaks the hearts of the righteous because it is one of the agonies of death. They fear this moment the most because they are waiting to hear whether the Angel of Death will give them the glad tidings of Paradise or the bad news of Hellfire.

[37] Abu Dawud, 3196; Al-Hakim, 1 / 37-38; Ahmed, 4 /287-288.

It is related that when he was in his death throes, Hudhaifah Ibn al-Yamani, told 'Abdullah Ibn Mas'oud, "Go and see what time it is." Ibn Mas'oud went out and came back, saying, "The sun has just risen." Hudhaifah Ibn al-Yamani replied, "I seek refuge with Allah from a morning in the Fire."

When he was in his death throes, Abu Hurairah wept and said, "I swear by Allah that I am not crying because I am leaving the life of this world, or because I am leaving you, but because I am waiting for one of two summons from my Lord — which will be either to the Garden or to the Fire."

It is related in the *Sahihain*, on the authority of 'Ubada Ibn as-Samit, that the Prophet said, "Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him — and whoever hates to meet Allah, Allah hates to meet him."

'A'isha, or some of the wives of the Prophet said, "But we dislike death." He replied, "It is not like that. What this means is that when the time of a believer's death approaches, he is given the good news of Allah's being pleased with him and His blessings on him, and so at this time nothing is dearer to him than what is coming to him. So he loves to meet Allah, and Allah loves to meet him. But when the time of a disbeliever's death approaches, he receives the bad news of Allah's being angry with him and His punishment, and so at that time nothing is more hateful to him than what is coming to him. So he hates to meet Allah, and Allah hates to meet him."[38]

Allah says:

(The angels descend on those who say,
'Our Lord is Allah,' and then go straight:
'Do not fear and do not grieve
but rejoice in the Garden you have been promised.
We are your protectors in the life of the dunya and the akhira.
You will have there all that your selves could wish for.
You will have there everything you demand.
Hospitality from One Who is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.') (41: 29-31)

Recommendations for when You are Dying

When the time comes for you to die you should relax. Your tongue should only be repeating the *shahada.* You should hope for good from Allah. You should be calm and at peace with yourself, because you will see the angels of mercy who will take away your soul and give you glad tidings of Paradise. As Allah says:

(Those the angels take in a virtuous state.
They say, 'Peace be upon you!
Enter the Garden for what you did.') (16: 32)

As for the evil-doers and unbelievers, Allah says:

(If only you could see when the angels take back
those who were kafir at their death,
beating their faces and their backs:
'Taste the punishment of the Burning!
That is for what you did.
Allah does not wrong His slaves.') (8: 51-52)

[38] Al-Bukhari, 11 / 357; Muslim, 17/9; At-Tirmidhi, 4 / 287; An-Nasa'i', 4/10.

Allah also says:

(If you could only see the wrongdoers in the throes of death when the angels are stretching out their hands, saying, Disgorge your own selves!') (6: 94)

Commentators on the Qur'an say, "Allah's words, *stretching out their hands,* means 'stretching out their hands to inflict punishment', because the soul of a disbeliever still permeates the body when the news of the Fire and the anger of the Lord is given. Then the angels smite the face and back of the disbeliever, saying, 'Disgorge your own self.'"

We seek refuge with Allah from His punishment and anger.

As for the believer, his or her tongue should be repeating the *shahada,* because the Prophet said, "Whoever says *La ilaha Allah* — there is no god only Allah — at the moment of death will enter the Garden."[39]

'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab said, "Remind the dying of the words *La ilaha 'illa' Allah* — there is no god only Allah — because they see what you cannot see."

It is also recommended to visit righteous people when they are in the throes of death and to make *du'a* for them, as these may benefit them.

It is also recommended for a dying person to hope for good from Allah, because of the *hadith* of Jabir Ibn Abdillah who said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say, three days before his death, 'None of you should approach death without only hoping for good from Allah.'"[40]

Anas said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say, 'Allah A has said, "Son of Adam, as long as you ask of Me and hope in Me I will pardon you in spite of what you have done — and I do not care. Son of Adam, even if your wrong actions were piled as high as the clouds in the sky, and then you asked My forgiveness, I would forgive you — and I do not care. Son of Adam, even if you were to approach Me with enough sins to fill the earth, and then you met Me, not associating anything with Me, then I would grant you just as much forgiveness.'"[41]

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[39] Abu Dawud, 3100; Al-Hakim, 1/351; Ahmed, 5/233.
[40] Muslim, 17/209; Abu Dawud, 2097.
[41] At-Tirmidhi, 13 /59-60, who classified it as *hasan gharib;* Ahmed, 5 /154; Ad-Darami, 2/322.

FOUR

PUNISHMENT AND BLESSINGS IN THE GRAVE

The *Salaf* and the *'ulama'* believe that after death a person is either punished or blessed in the grave. On the Day of Rising, souls are returned to their bodies and they rise from their graves to stand before their Lord to be judged. The proofs of this from the *Qur'an* and *ahadith* are numerous.

<u>*From the Qur'an*</u>

Allah says:

> ***('O self at rest and at peace,***
> ***return to your Lord,***
> ***well-pleasing and well-pleased!***
> ***Enter among My slaves! Enter My Garden.') (89: 30-32)***

Allah also says:

> ***(So Allah safeguarded him from the evil things they plotted***
> ***and a most evil torment engulfed Pharaoh's people —***
> ***the Fire, morning and night, to which they are exposed;***
> ***and on the Day the Hour takes place:***
> ***'Admit Pharaoh's people to the harshest punishment!') (40: 45-46)***

And again, He says:

> ***(Leave them until they meet their Day***
> ***when they will be struck down by the Blast:***
> ***the Day their ploys will not profit them at all***
> ***and they will not be helped.***
> ***And those who do wrong will have***
> ***a punishment besides that***
> ***but most of them do not know it.) (52: 43-45)***

And He says:

> ***(We will give them a taste of lesser punishment***
> ***before the greater punishment,***
> ***so that hopefully they will turn back.) (41 32: 21)***

Ibn Abbas referred to this verse as confirmation and proof indicating that punishment in the grave does take place.

<u>*From the Ahadith*</u>

Ibn Abbas related "Once the Prophet was passing by the graves of Madinah when he heard the cries of two people who were being punished in their graves. The Prophet t said, 'They are being punished, but they are not being punished because of a major wrong action — and yet their wrong actions are serious. One of them used not to avoid (being soiled with) urine, and the other used to go about spreading false rumours.' Then the Prophet t asked for a green

palm tree branch and split it into two and placed one piece on each grave, saying, 'May their punishment cease for as long as these pieces of branch do not dry out.'"[42]

Zaid Ibn Thabit said, "The Messenger of Allah was riding with us towards the dwellings of Banu an-Najjar when his mule shied so that he nearly fell off. He saw that there were four or five or six graves there. He said, 'Which of you knows about who is buried in these graves?' Someone said, 'I do.' So the Prophet asked, 'What state were they in when they died?' He replied, 'They died as *mushrikun.'* He said, 'These people are being punished in their graves. If it were not for the fact that you would stop burying your dead in graves if you could hear the torment in the graves which I can hear, then I would certainly have made you listen to it.' Then, turning his face towards us, he said, 'Seek refuge in Allah from the torment of the Fire.' We said, 'We seek refuge in Allah from the torment of the Fire.' He said, 'Seek refuge in Allah from the torment of the grave.' We said, 'We seek refuge in Allah from the torment of the grave.' He said, 'Seek refuge in Allah from turmoil, both apparent and hidden.' We said, 'We seek refuge in Allah from turmoil, both apparent and hidden.' He said, 'Seek refuge in Allah from the trial of the *Dajjal.'* We said, 'We seek refuge in Allah from the trial of the *Dajjal.'"*[43]

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "When you finish the last *tashahud*, you should seek refuge in Allah from four things: from the punishment in the grave, from the punishment in the Fire of Hell, from the trials of life and death, and from the trial of *Al-Masih Ad-Dajjal."*[44]

The Questioning in the Grave

Qatadah related from Anas that the Prophet said, "When a dead person has been laid to rest in his grave, his companions leave him — and even while he can still hear their footsteps, two angels come to him and make him sit up and ask him, 'What did you use to say about this man (Muhammad)?' The *mumin* replies, 'I bear witness that he is Allah's slave and His Messenger.' Then they will say to him, 'Look at the place you might have had in the Fire of Hell — Allah has given you a place in the Garden instead of it,' and he will see both places." Qatada also said, "We were told that his grave would be made spacious." Then Qatada, continued with the transmission of Anas who said, "When a *munafiq* or a *kafir* is asked, 'What did you use to say about this man (Muhammad)?' he replies, 'I do not remember — but I used to say what other people used to say.' So they will say to him, 'You did not know and you did not follow guidance.' Then he will be hit so hard with an iron hammer and he will give such a cry that everything near him will hear it, except for the *jinn* and people."[45]

Al-Bara' Ibn Azib related that the Prophet said: "When a Muslim is questioned in his grave, he will testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah — and this is what is meant by the words of Allah :

> ***(Allah makes those who have iman firm***
> ***with the Firm Word***
> ***in the life of the dunya and the akhira.)"[46] (14: 29)***

It should also be pointed out that the punishment of the grave is the punishment in the *barzakh* to which Allah refers in the Qur'an:

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[42] Al-Bukhari, 3/242; An-Nasa'i, 4/106.
[43] Muslim, 17/202; Ahmed, 3/103, 144-145.
[44] Al-Bukhari, 3/241.
[45] Al-Bukhari, 3/232-233; Muslim, 17/203; Ahmed, 3/126, 233.
[46] Al-Bukhari, 3/231-232; Muslim, 17/204.

(When death comes to one of them,
he says, 'My Lord, send me back again,
so that perhaps I may act rightly
regarding the things I failed to do!'
No indeed! It is just words he utters.
Before them there is an interspace
until the Day they are raised up.) (23: 100)

Anyone who dies and deserves punishment, will receive part of it in the grave.

The Punishment in the Grave

Samurah Ibn Jundub said, "Whenever the Prophet finished the (dawn) prayer, he would look at us and ask, 'Who of you had a dream last night?' So if anyone had had a dream, he would describe it and the Prophet would say, *'Ma sha'Allah.'* One morning, he asked whether anyone of us had had a dream and we replied that we had not. The Prophet said, 'I dreamt last night that two men came to me and held me by the hands and took me to al-Quds (Jerusalem). While we were there, I saw a person sitting down with another standing next to him with an iron hook in his hand. He was pushing it inside the mouth of the first one until it reached his jawbone and then tearing out one side of his cheek. Then while he was doing the same with the other side, the first side of his cheek would become normal again — and then he would do the same all over again. I said, "What is this?"

'They told me to move on and so we went on until we came to a man lying flat on his back with another man standing over his head. He was holding a stone or a piece of rock and dropping it on to the head of the man lying down. When it hit him, the stone would roll away. The man would go to pick it up and before he had returned, the crushed head had become normal again — and then the man would come back and smash it again. I said, "What is this?"

'They told me to move on and so we carried on and passed by a hole like an oven, with a narrow top and a wide bottom and a fire blazing at the bottom of it. Whenever the flames of the fire leapt up, the people in it were lifted up so high that they almost escaped out of the top, and then whenever the flames died down, the people would fall back down into it. The men and women in it were naked. I said, "What is this?"

'They told me to move on and so we went on until we reached a river of blood in which there was a man, with another man standing on the bank. He had some stones in front of him and was watching the man standing in the river. Whenever the man in the river tried to climb out, the other would throw a stone at his mouth and make him retreat to where he had been before. As often as he tried to come out, the other would throw a stone at his mouth and make him return to where he had been before. I asked, "What is this?"

‘They told me to move on and so we did until we reached a well watered garden of green with a huge tree, at whose foot was an old man sitting with some children. There was another person near the tree with a fire in front of him which he was tending.

'The two men made me climb up the tree and told me to enter a dwelling which was better than any I had have ever seen before. Inside there were some old men and some young men, women and children.

'Then they took me out of this dwelling and made me climb further up the tree and told me to enter another dwelling which was even better and more excellent (than the first). Inside there were some old and young people.

'I said to them, "You have kept me on the move all night — now explain everything that I

have seen to me." They replied, "Certainly."

'"As for the one whose cheeks you saw being torn away, he was a liar who used to tell lies which people would believe and pass on until they spread right across the world — so he will continue to be punished like this until the Day of Rising.

'"As for the one whose head you saw being crushed, he was a man whom Allah had given knowledge of the Qur'an, but he used to sleep all night and did not act on it during the day — so he will continue to be punished like this until the Day of Rising.

'"As for those whom you saw in the hole, they were adulterers.

'"As for those whom you saw in the river of blood, they used to deal in *riba* (usury).

'"The old man who was sitting at the base of the tree was Ibrahim and the little children with him were the offspring of his people — and the person tending the fire was *Malik*, the keeper of the Fire of Hell. The first dwelling in which you entered was the dwelling of the common believers, and the second dwelling was that of the martyrs. I am j*ibril* and this is *Mikail*. Now raise your head."

'I raised my head and saw what looked like a cloud above me. They said, "That is your dwelling." I said, "Then let me enter my dwelling." They replied, "You still have a life which you have not yet completed — when you have completed it then you will enter your dwelling."'[47]

This is an authentic *sahih hadith* which vividly describes some of the punishments of the grave, as the scholars have interpreted it.

Avoiding Punishment in the Grave

This matter has two approaches, one general and one specific.

As regards the general approach, we can avoid punishment in the grave by obeying the commands of Allah and by refraining from wrong actions. We should be pleasing to Allah in this world in order to avoid the punishment of the grave, as well as that of the next world. As we have seen in the above *hadith*, the Prophet described some of the (disobedient) people who are punished in the grave including liars, slanderers, hypocrites, adulterers and usurers.

As regards the specific approach, there are a number of sayings of the Prophet which indicate how we can avoid punishment in the grave:

Salman al-Farsi related that the Prophet said, "Keeping watch for a day and a night (during *jihad)* is better than fasting for a whole month and standing in prayer every night. If a person dies (while doing this), it will be as if his action continues and he will go on receiving his reward for it perpetually and he will be saved from the punishment of the grave."[48]

Fudalah Ibn Ubaid related that the Prophet said, "Everyone who dies has completed their actions, except for someone who was at the frontier (fighting in the Way of Allah) — whose actions will continue to go on increasing until the Day of Rising and who will be safe from the trials in the grave."[49]

Al-Miqdam Ibn Ma'd Yakrib related that the Prophet said, "The martyr receives six blessings from Allah: he is forgiven as soon as the first drop of his blood is shed; he is shown his dwelling in the Garden; he is protected from the punishment in the grave; he is kept safe from the Greatest Terror; he has placed on his head a crown of honour, a ruby of which is better

[47] Al-Bukhari, 3/251-252.
[48] Muslim, 13/61; At-Tirmidhi, 7/162; An-Nasa'i', 6/39.
[49] Abu Dawud, 2483; At-Tirmidhi, 7/123; Ahmed, 6/20; Al-Hakim, 2/144.

than the world and what it contains; he is married to seventy-two wives of the maidens with large dark eyes; and he is made intercessor for seventy of his relatives."[50]

[50] At-Tirmidhi, 7/161; Ibn Majah, 2799; Ahmed, 4/131.

FIVE

THE DAY OF RISING

So far we have considered the agonies of death and the punishment in the grave for wrong-doers, but more terrifying than these are the standing before Allah on the Day of Rising, His questioning us about all the things we did in the life of this world, the setting up of the Balance — and then the *Sirat,* the bridge over the Fire which must be crossed in order to enter the Garden on the Day of Judgement, and which is described in the *ahadith* as being narrower than the blade of a sword, thinner than a hair and with obstacles on it to block wrong-doers and plunge them into *Jahannam* (the Fire of Hell). Some will cross the *Sirat* into the Garden like lightning or like the wind, some with ease, some with difficulty and some with great difficulty — and some will fall down into the Fire waiting below.

These will be terrifying moments on the Day of Rising — and you must know about them and believe in them and reflect carefully and deeply about them in order to prepare yourself for them.

You must be aware of the Day when you will be resurrected from the grave, bewildered by the sound of the Trumpet being blown. Allah says:

(The Trumpet will be blown
and those in the heavens
and those in the earth
will all lose consciousness,
except those Allah wills.
Then it will blown a second time
and at once they will be standing upright,
looking on.) (39: 65).

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet said, "Between the two blasts of the Trumpet there will be forty." People asked, "O Abu Hurairah! Forty days?" I refused to reply. They asked, "Forty years?" I still refused to reply and added, "The whole of the human body wastes away and perishes except for the coccyx — and from that bone Allah will bring the whole body back to life."[51]

You must think about all the creatures — about their abasement and sorrow, waiting for Allah to judge between them. How will you be when the heavens and the earth are transformed — when the earth is darkened and people are waiting naked and barefooted, with their eyes fixedly staring in horror? That Day will be long — and so too will be the waiting and standing. Every nursing mother will forget about her baby and whoever is pregnant will miscarry and it will seem as if all mankind is drunk, but it will not be because they are drunk, but because of the severity of the dread of Allah — on the Day when the heavens are cleft asunder, and the stars are fallen and scattered, and the seas burst forth like blazing fire, and the graves are turned upside down and spill out what was in them, and the sun is overthrown, and the mountains collapse, and pregnant she-camels are neglected, and the wild animals are huddled together, and souls are reunited with their bodies, and the Fire of Hell is kindled to a fierce blaze and Paradise is brought near.

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[51] Al-Bukhari, 6 /338.

Names of the Day of Rising

Allah is has given many names to the Day of Rising. Each of these names emphasises a particular aspect and meaning of that Day:

The Day of Resurrection, the Hour, the Blowing of the Horn, the Earthquake, the Day of the Mighty Noise, the Calamity, the Day of the Rising of the Dead, the Day of Leaving the Grave, the Day of Gathering, the Day when Things are Made Apparent, the Day of Assembling Together, the Day of Discriminating between Good and Evil, the Day when the Sky is Split Asunder, the Day of Dispersion, the Day of the Greatest Terror, the Day of Summoning, the Event *(Al-Waqi'a),* the Day of Abasement and Exaltation (of the *kafirun* and the *mum inun),* the Day of Accounting, the Day of Questioning, the Day of Witnessing, the Day of Recrimination, the Day of Retribution, the Day of Reality, the Day of Complete Overshadowing, the Day of Great Lamenting, the Day of Threatening, the Day of the Deen, the Day of Repayment, the Day of Regret, the Day of Replacing One World for Another, the Day of the Meeting (with Allah), the Day that is Near, the Day of the Final Abode, the Day of Fate, the Day of Destiny, the Day of Weighing in the Balance, the Day of Sterility, the Day of Ultimate Difficulty, the Day that Everyone shall Witness, the Day of Mutual Loss, the Day when Secrets are made Known, the Day of Altering, the Overwhelming, the Day of Supplication, the Day of Intercession, the Day of Sweating, the Day of Anxiety and Agitation, and the Day of Escape.

Woe to those who are negligent and careless. Allah has sent us His Messenger and His Book, and has informed us about the names and attributes of the Day of Rising. He warns us against being negligent. He says:

> ***(Mankind's Reckoning has drawn very close to them,***
> ***yet they heedlessly turn away.***
> ***No fresh reminder comes to them from their Lord***
> ***without their listening to it as if it was a game.***
> ***Their hearts are distracted.) (21: 1-3)***

Allah also informs us that the Day of Rising is near. He says:

> ***(The Hour has drawn near and the moon has split.) (54: 1)***

And:

> ***(They see it as something distant,***
> ***but We see it very close.) (70: 6-7)***

And:

> ***(People will ask you about the Last Hour.***
> ***Say: 'Only Allah has knowledge of it.***
> ***What will make you understand?***
> ***It may be that the Last Hour is very near.') (33: 63)***

Sahl Ibn Sa'd related that the Prophet said, "On the Day of Rising people will be gathered together on earth which is reddish white — the same colour as a fresh loaf of bread. There will not be any landmarks on that earth for anyone."[52]

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "People will be gathered in three ways: there will be those who come full of hope and fear; there will be those who come riding two or three or ten on a camel. The rest of the people will be herded to gather next to the Fire which will be

[52] Al-Bukhari, 11 / 372; Muslim, 17/ 134.

near them when they doze in the afternoon, and stay with them wherever they spend the night, and remain with them in the morning wherever they may be, and still be with them in the afternoon wherever they may be then."[53]

Qatadah reported that Anas said, "A man said, 'O Prophet of Allah! Will Allah really gather the *kafirun* on their faces on the Day of Rising?' He replied, 'Will the One Who made him walk on his feet in this world, not be able to make him walk on his face on the Day of Rising?" Qatada continued: "Yes, By the power of our Lord! It says this in the Qur'an when Allah says:

(We will gather them on the Day of Rising,
flat on their faces,
blind, dumb, and deaf.
Their shelter will be Hell.
Whenever the Blaze dies down,
We will increase it for them.) "[54] (17: 97)

What a difference between the two groups: the *muminun* will ride to Paradise and to the Mercy of Allah — and the *kafirun* will be herded to the Fire of Hell where they will receive severe punishment. Allah it says:

(On that Day We will gather those who have taqwa
to the All-Merciful with due ceremony.
But We will drive the evildoers to Hell,
like cattle to a watering hole.) (19: 86-87)

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri reported, "During the lifetime of the Prophet some people asked, 'O Messenger of Allah! Will we see our Lord on the Day of Rising?' The Prophet replied, 'Yes! Do you have any difficulty in seeing the sun at midday when it is bright and there is not a cloud in the sky?' They replied, 'No.' He asked, 'Do you have any difficulty in seeing the full moon at night when it is bright and there is not a cloud in the sky?' They replied, 'No.' The Prophet said, 'Just as you have no difficulty in seeing either of them so you will have no difficulty in seeing Allah on the Day of Rising.'

"On the Day of Rising, a caller will announce, 'Let every nation follow what they used to worship.' Then there will be none of those who used to worship anything other than Allah, like idols and other false gods, who do not fall into the Fire of Hell — until no one will remain except those who used to worship Allah, both those who were obedient and those who were disobedient, and also some of the People of the Book. Then the Jews will be summoned and it will be said to them, 'Who did you use to worship?' They will say, 'We used to worship Ezra, the son of Allah.' It will be said to them, 'You are liars, for Allah has never taken anyone as a wife or a son. What do you want now?' They will say, 'O our Lord! We are thirsty, so give us something to drink.' Then they will be dealt with and addressed like this: 'You will indeed have something to drink,' — and they will be driven towards the Fire of Hell which will appear like a mirage whose different sides are devouring each other. Then they will fall into the Fire.'"[55]

Glorified and Exalted is Allah. In the life of this world people appear the same: both the *muminun* and the *kafirun* are provided with all kinds of sustenance — but when death takes their souls, each group heads for a different life in the grave, determined by their actions in the life of this world — and when the Trumpet is blown, they will come swiftly out of their

[53] Al-Bukhari, 11 / 377; Muslim, 17/194-195; An-Nasa'i, 4 / 115-116.
[54] Al-Bukhari, 11 /377; Muslim, 17/ 148-149.
[55] Al-Bukhari, 13 / 473; Muslim, 3 / 53-60; and Abu Dawud.

graves to their Lord. On that Day no one will be wronged in any way, nor will they be rewarded for anything other than what they used to do.

The dwellers of Paradise will be occupied with joyful things — they will be with their partners in pleasant shades, and there they will have fruits of all kinds and all they ask for. Allah it will say to them, *"Salam* — Peace be upon you — because of what you protected patiently!" How excellent indeed is their final abode!

As for the *kafirun* and the *mushrikun*, they will be dragged into the Fire of Hell in chains, with iron collars round their necks, and they will be scalded with boiling water. Allah will say to them, "There you will remain in disgrace — and do not speak to Me!"

On that Day everything will become clear — what was unknown will be known. Allah says:

> ***(Would We make those who have iman and do right actions***
> ***the same as those who cause corruption on the earth?***
> ***Would We make those who have taqwa***
> ***the same as the dissolute?) (38: 27)***

In another verse, Allah says:

> ***(Anyone who does a good action***
> ***will get something better.***
> ***As for anyone who does a bad action,***
> ***those who have done bad actions***
> ***will only be repaid for what they did.) (28: 84)***

The Terrors of the Day of Rising

Allah says:

> ***(Do not consider Allah to be unaware***
> ***of what the wrongdoers perpetrate.***
> ***He is merely deferring them to a Day***
> ***on which their sight will be transfixed,***
> ***rushing headlong —***
> ***heads back, eyes vacant, hearts hollow.) (14: 44-45)***

Allah also says:

> ***(On the Day the sky is like molten brass***
> ***and the mountains like tufts of coloured wool,***
> ***no good friend will ask about his friend***
> ***even though they can see each other.***
> ***An evildoer will wish he could ransom himself***
> ***from the punishment of that Day,***
> ***by means of his sons,***
> ***or his wife or his brother***
> ***or his family who sheltered him***
> ***or everyone else on earth,***
> ***if that only meant that he could save himself.) (70: 8-14)***

This means that there will not be anyone who can not see his father and children and relatives — but he will neither speak to them nor ask them for any help.

And in another verse, Allah says:

> ***(... on that Day every man among them will have***
> ***concerns enough of his own.) (80: 37)***

And:

> ***(No burden-bearer can bear another's burden.***
> ***If someone weighed down***
> ***calls for help to bear his load,***
> ***none of it will be borne for him,***
> ***even by his next of kin.) (35: 18)***

'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar related that the Prophet said, "On the Day when all mankind will stand before the Lord of the Worlds, some of them will be drenched in their own sweat up to the middle of their ears."[56]

Al-Miqdad Ibn Al-Aswad al-Kindi reported: "I heard the Prophet say, 'On the Day of Rising the sun will come so close to everyone that it will be as if it is only a mile away. People will be drenched in sweat depending on their actions, some up to their knees, some up to the waist and some will be wearing a bridle of sweat,' — and as he said this, the Messenger of Allah pointed with his hand towards his mouth."[57]

The Day of Reckoning

Allah says:

> ***(Today We seal up their mouths***
> ***and their hands speak to Us,***
> ***and their feet bear witness***
> ***to what they have earned.) (36: 64)***

And:

> ***(On the day We crowd the enemies of Allah into the Fire***
> ***and they are driven in close-packed ranks,***
> ***when they reach it, their hearing, sight and skin***
> ***will testify against them concerning what they did.***
> ***They will ask their skins, 'Why did you testify against us?'***
> ***and they will reply, 'Allah gave us speech***
> ***as He has given speech to everything.***
> ***He created you in the first place***
> ***and you will be returned to Him.***
> ***You did not think to shield yourselves from***
> ***your hearing, sight and skin testifying against you***
> ***and you thought that Allah would never know***
> ***much of what you did.***
> ***It is that thought you had about your Lord***
> ***that has destroyed you***
> ***so now you find yourselves among the lost.) (41: 18-22)***

Anas reported: "We were in the company of the Messenger of Allah when he smiled and said, 'Do you know why I am smiling?' We said, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' So he said, 'I was thinking of the conversation which a slave will have with his Lord. He will say, "My

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[56] Al-Bukhari, 11/ 392; Muslim, 17/ 195.
[57] Muslim, 17/196; At-Tirmidhi, 9 / 355.

Lord, have You not guaranteed me protection from injustice?" He will say, "Yes." Then the slave will say, "I will not accept any testimony against me except from myself." He will say, "The testimony against you from your self will be sufficient, together with that of the two angels who were appointed to record your actions." Then his mouth will be sealed and his hands and his feet will be asked to speak and they will speak of what he has done. Then his mouth will be allowed to speak and he will say to them, "Damn you! May the curse of Allah be on you! I was trying to keep you safe."""[58]

'Abdullah Ibn Mas'oud reported that the Prophet said, "On the Day of Rising the feet of the son of Adam will not move until he has been questioned about five things: on how he spent his life; on what he did with his youth; on how he acquired his wealth; on how he spent it; and on how he acted on what he knew."[59]

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "Whoever has a claim will have their right fulfilled on the Day of Rising — even a hornless sheep who has a claim against a horned sheep.'[60]

The Balance and the Final Reckoning Allah says:

(We will set up the Just Balance on the Day of Rising
and no self will be wronged in any way.
Even if it is no more than the weight
of a grain of mustard seed,
We will produce it.
We are Sufficient as Reckoner.) (21: 47)

And He also says:

(The weighing that Day will be the truth.
As for those whose scales are heavy,
they are the successful.
As for those whose scales are light,
they are the ones who have lost their own selves
because they wrongfully rejected Our Signs.) (7: 7-8)

There are four views as regards what is weighed in the Just Balance:

Firstly, that it is actions which are weighed: servants' actions are translated into forms and put on the Scales. Allah says:

(Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it.
Whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.) (99: 8-9).

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "There are two phrases which are very pleasing to the Most Merciful. They are very easy on the tongue to say — and they weigh very heavy in the Balance. They are *Subhana' Allahi wa biHamdihi* and *Subhana' Allahi'l-Adheem* — 'Glory be to Allah and may He be praised' and 'Glory be to Allah the Most Great'."[61]

Secondly, that it is the records of actions which are weighed: and this is supported by the *hadith* related by Amr' Ibn al-'As, in which the Prophet said, "On the Day of Rising, Allah will separate a man from his people in the presence of all His creatures and spread out ninety-nine scrolls before him, each scroll stretching as far as the eye can see, and He will say, 'Do

[58] Muslim, 18 /104 -105.
[59] At-Tirmidhi, 9/253, who classified it as *hasan sahih.*
[60] Muslim, 16 / 132; At-Tirmidhi, 9 / 255; Ahmed, 2/ 235.
[61] Al-Bukhari, 11 / 206; Muslim, 17/19; At-Tirmidhi, 3534.

you object to anything in these? Have My scribes who made this record wronged you?' He will reply, 'No, my Lord.' He it will ask him if he has any mitigation, and when he tells his Lord that he has none, He it will say, 'On the contrary, you have one good deed with Us — and today you will not be wronged.' A piece of paper will then be produced which states, 'I testify that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is His Slave and His Messenger,' and He will say, 'Come and be weighed.' He will ask his Lord, 'What is this piece of paper compared to all these scrolls?' He it will reply, 'You will not be wronged.' The scrolls will then be put on one side of the Scales and the piece of paper on the other — and the scrolls will become light and the piece of paper heavy, for nothing can compare in weight with the Name of Allah."[62]

Thirdly, that it is the rewards for actions which are weighed: and this is indicated in the *hadith* related by An-Nawwas Ibn Sam'an al-Kilani, in which he said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say, 'On the Day of Rising the Qur'an and those who acted in accordance with it will be brought forward with *Surat'al-Baqarah* and *Surat'Ali'Imran* preceding them.' The Messenger of Allah compared them to three things, which I did not forget afterwards. He compared them to two clouds or two black canopies with light between them, and to two flocks of birds in formation, interceding for whoever used to recite them."[63]

At-Tirmidhi, may Allah have mercy on him, said, "This means that the reward for reciting them is brought forward and weighed."

Fourthly, that it is the person himself or herself who is weighed: and this is indicated in the *hadith* related by Abu Hurairah, in which the Prophet said, "On the Day of Rising, a huge fat man will come who will not equal the weight of the wing of a mosquito in the Sight of Allah," and then the Prophet added:

(... and on the Day of Rising,
We will not assign them any weight.) (18: 105)

So, from the above sources, we conclude that the slave, and his actions, and the record of his actions, and the reward for his actions, will be weighed on the Day of Rising, and there is no contradiction between the four views — and Allah knows best.

The Sirat

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "Then a Bridge will be laid over the Fire of Hell." The Messenger of Allah added, "I will be the first to cross it — and the supplication of the Messengers on that Day, will be *'Allahumma Sallim, Sallim,'* — 'O Allah, save us, save us!' — and hanging over that Bridge there will be hooks similar to the thorns of *As-Sa'dan* (a thorn tree). Have you seen the thorns of *As-Sa'dan?"* The Companions replied, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah."

He continued, "So the hooks hanging over that Bridge will be like the thorns of *As-Sa'dan* except that the immensity of their size is known only to Allah. These hooks will catch people according to their actions. Some people will be ruined because of their evil actions, and some will be cut to pieces and will fall down into the Fire of Hell — but they will be saved afterwards when Allah has completed judging His slaves and decides to take whomever He wishes out of the Fire from among those who used to testify that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah.

"Allah will order the angels to take them out and the angels will recognise them by the signs

[62] At-Tirmidhi, 10/107 who classified it as *hasan gharib;* Ibn Majah, 4300; Al-Hakim, 1/529; Ahmed, 2/213; Ibn Hibban, 2524.
[63] Muslim, 6/ 90-91; at-Tirmidhi, 11 /14-15.

of the traces of prostration on them, for Allah has forbidden the Fire to burn away the traces of prostration from the bodies of the sons of Adam. So they will take them out, and by then they will be very charred, and then some water called *Ma'ul-Hayat* — the Water of Life — will be poured over them and they will spring back to life just as a seed springs to life on the bank of a stream of rainwater."[64]

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri related that the Prophet said, "Then the Bridge will be laid across the Fire of Hell." We, the Companions of the Prophet said, "O Messenger of Allah ! What is the Bridge like?" He related that the Prophet said, "It is slippery, with obstacles on it — and hooks like the thorn-pod that is wide at one end and narrow at the other, with thorns with curved points. A thorn-pod like this is found in *Najd* and it is called *As-Sa'dan.*

"Some of the believers will cross the bridge as swiftly as the blink of an eye and others as quick as lightning, or a strong wind, or fast horses or she-camels. So some will cross safely without coming to any harm; some will cross safely but after receiving a few scratches, and some will fall down into the Fire of Hell. The last person to cross will be dragged over."[65]

[64] *hadith sahih* transmitted by Al-Bukhari, 1 / 204; Muslim, 182; Ahmed, 2/ 275-276; Ibn Abu A'sim, 1 /208.
[65] *hadith sahih* reported by Al-Bukhari, 9/532; and Muslim.

SIX

HEAVEN AND HELL

The Fire

In his book *Ihya' Ulum'ud-Deen,* Al-Ghazali, may Allah have mercy on him, says, "O you who are negligent towards yourself, distracted by what you have of the life of this world, which is destined not to last — stop being preoccupied with the life of this world and consider your final destination — for you have been warned that the Fire of Hell will be experienced by everyone. Allah says:

> ***(There is not one of you who will not come to it.***
> ***That is the final decision of your Lord.***
> ***Then We will rescue those who had taqwa***
> ***and We will leave the wrongdoers in it on their knees.) (19: 71-72)***

"So you will certainly be one of those who pass over the Fire of Hell, but you can not be certain whether or not you will reach the Garden — or fall into the Fire. So you must fear that terrifying time and prepare yourself for it."

The Depth and Heat of the Fire

Abu Hurairah related: "Once we were in the company of the Messenger of Allah when we heard a terrible sound, at which the Messenger of Allah said, 'Do you know what that was?' We said, 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' Then he said, 'That was a stone which was thrown into the Fire seventy years ago — it was falling all that time and only then did it hit the bottom.'"[66]

'Utbah gave a talk in which he first praised Allah and glorified Him and then said, "To continue, truly knowledge of the end of this world cannot be acquired too soon. Nothing will be left of it — not even as much water as remains in a cup after it has been drained by its owner. You are moving towards an abode which knows no end, so you should send good ahead of you — for we have been told that a stone will be thrown in from the edge of the Fire and it will keep falling for seventy years without reaching the bottom of it.[67]

Hell has seven gates. Allah says:

> ***(Hell is the promised meeting-place for all of them.***
> ***It has seven gates***
> ***and each gate has its allotted share.) (15: 43-44)***

Abdullah Ibn Mas'oud commented on Allah's words,

> ***(...fear the Fire whose fuel is people and stones,***
> ***made ready for the kafirun.) (2: 23)***

as follows: "The stones are made of sulphur which were created by Allah when He created the heavens and earth and which He has prepared for the *kafirun."*

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "As people are being thrown into the Fire it will keep saying, 'Are there any more?' until Allah puts His Foot over it and it says, 'Enough!

[66] Muslim, 17/179.
[67] Muslim, 7075; Ahmed, 4 / 174; At-Tirmidhi, 10/ 45-46.

Enough!'"[68]

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "The fire which the children of Adam kindle is only a seventieth of the Fire of Hell." They said, "Messenger of Allah, the fire here is certainly hot enough." He said, "The Fire there is sixty-nine times hotter."[69]

The Food of the People of the Fire

Allah says:

> ***(They have no food but a bitter thorny bush***
> ***which neither nourishes nor satisfies.) (88: 6-7)***

And:

> ***(With Us there are shackles and a Blazing Fire***
> ***and food that chokes and a painful torment,) (73: 11-12)***

And:

> ***(Then you, you misguided, you deniers***
> ***will eat from the tree of Zaqqum***
> ***filling your stomachs with it***
> ***and drink scalding water on top of it***
> ***slurping like thirst-crazed camels.***
> ***This will be their hospitality on the Day of Judgment!) (56: 54-59)***

Allah describes the tree of *Zaqqum* as follows:

> ***(It is a tree that emerges in the depths of the Blazing Fire.***
> ***Its fruits are just like the heads of shaytans.***
> ***They will eat from it and fill their bellies with it.***
> ***Then they will have a boiling brew to drink on top of it.***
> ***Then their destination will be the Blazing Fire.) (37: 64-68)***

Ibn Abbas related that the Prophet recited the verse:

> ***(You who have iman! have taqwa of Allah***
> ***with the taqwa due to Him***
> ***and do not die except as Muslims.) (3: 102)***

and said: "If a drop from the tree of *Zaqqum* were to fall on this world it would contaminate all the sustenance of the people of this world — so imagine what it will be like when it is the only food of the people of the Fire."[70]

The Drink of the People of the Fire

Allah says:

> ***(And beyond him is Hell***
> ***where he will be given pus to drink.***
> ***He gulps at it but can hardly swallow it down.***
> ***Death comes at him from every side***
> ***but he does not die.***
> ***And beyond him is relentless punishment.) (14: 19-20)***

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[68] Al-Bukhari, 8/594; Muslim, 17/184.
[69] Al-Bukhari, 6/330; Muslim, 17/ 179; At-Tirmidhi, 10/58; Imam Malik in *Al-Muwatta'*, 2/ 994
[70] At-Tirmidhi, 10/54, who classified it as *hasan sahih;* Ahmed, 1/301; Ibn Majah, 4325.

And:

> ***(... those who will be in the Fire timelessly, for ever,***
> ***with boiling water to drink which lacerates their bowels ...) (47: 15)***

And:

> ***(Those who are kafir***
> ***will have garments of fire cut out for them,***
> ***and boiling water poured over their heads,***
> ***which will melt the contents of their bellies as well as their skin,***
> ***and they will be beaten with cudgels made of iron.***
> ***Every time they want to come out of it,***
> ***because of their suffering,***
> ***they will be driven back into it:***
> ***'Taste the punishment of the Burning!') (22: 19-20)***

And:

> ***(If they call for help, they will be helped with water***
> ***like seething molten brass, frying their faces.***
> ***What a noxious drink! What an evil repose!) (18: 29)***

The Clothing and Shelter of the People of the Fire

Allah says:

> ***(... that Day you will see the evildoers yoked together in chains,***
> ***wearing shirts of tar, their faces enveloped in the Fire.) (14: 51-52)***

Abu Malik al-Ash'ari related that the Prophet said, "If a woman who wails excessively (at someone's death) does not ask forgiveness before she dies, she will be made to stand on the Day of Rising wearing clothes of tar with an itchy undergarment."[71]

Allah says:

> ***(Those who are kafir***
> ***will have garments of fire cut out for them,***
> ***and boiling water poured over their heads ...) (22: 19-20)***

Samurah Ibn Jundub related that the Prophet said, "There will be some who are in the Fire up to their ankles, some who are in the Fire up to their knees, some who are in the Fire up to their waist, and some who are in the Fire up to their collar-bone."[72]

Ibn Abbas related that the Prophet said, "Of the dwellers in the Fire, Abu Talib will have the least suffering — and he will be wearing two sandals (of fire) which make his brain boil."[73]

Allah says:

> ***(They will have Hell as a resting-place***
> ***and covering layers on top of them.) (7: 40)***

And:

> ***(They will have awnings of Fire above them***
> ***and awnings below them.) (39: 15)***

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[71] Muslim, 6/ 235-236.
[72] Muslim, 17 / 180.
[73] Muslim, 3 / 85.

The Hideous Appearance of the People of the Fire

Abu Hurairah. related that the Prophet said, "The space between the two shoulders of a *kafir* (in the Fire) will be the same as the distance covered by a fast rider in three days."[74]

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "The molar tooth of a *kafir* (in the Fire) — or the canine teeth of a *kafir* (in the Fire) — will be the size of *Uhud* and the thickness of his skin a three night's journey."[75]

The Punishment of the People of the Fire

Anas Ibn Malik, related that the Prophet said, "One of the people of Hell who used to lead a life of ease and plenty amongst the people in this world will be dipped just once into the Fire on the Day of Rising and then it will be said to him, 'O son of Adam, did you ever find any comfort or obtain any benefit (in the world)?' He will reply, 'By Allah, no, my Lord.' Then one of the people of Paradise who had a most difficult life in this world will be dipped just once into the Garden and then it will be said to him, 'O son of Adam, did you ever experience any hardship or suffer any distress (in the world)?' And he will reply, 'By Allah, no, my Lord, I never experienced any hardship or suffered any distress.[76]

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "If there is anyone to whom Allah has given wealth but he does not pay *zakat* on it, then on the Day of Rising his wealth will appear to him in the form of a smooth-headed poisonous snake with two venomous fangs in its mouth which will wrap itself round his neck and bite him on his cheeks saying, 'I am your wealth, I am your treasure.'" Then the Prophet recited this Divine verse:

(Those who are tight-fisted
with the bounty Allah has given them
should not suppose that that is better for them.
No indeed, it is worse for them!
What they were tight-fisted with
will be hung around their necks
on the Day of Rising.) (3: 180)" [77]

An-Nu'man Ibn Bashir related that the Prophet said, "The person who is punished the least from among the people of the Fire on the Day of Rising will be a man who has two smouldering embers placed under the soles of his feet which will make his brain boil like water boiling in a *mirjal* (a copper pot) or a *qumqum* (a narrow-necked pot)."[78]

The Anguish of the People of the Fire

The anguish of the people of the Fire includes the following:

Firstly, the angels will reproach them as they are driven into their abode in the Fire of Hell. Allah says:

(Each time a group is flung into it
its custodians will question them:
'Did no warner come to you?'
They will say, 'Yes indeed,
a warner did come to us

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[74] Al-Bukhari, 11/ 415; Muslim, 17/186.
[75] Muslim, 17/186; At-Tirmidhi, 10/47-48.
[76] Muslim, 17/149; Ibn Majah, 4321.
[77] Al-Bukhari, *Kitab az-Zakat,* 683.
[78] Al-Bukhari, 11/ 417; Muslim, 3/85-86; At-Tirmidhi, 2744.

but we denied him and said,
"Allah has sent nothing down.
You are just greatly misguided."'
They will say, 'If only we had really listened
and used our intellect,
we would not have been Companions of the Blaze.') (67: 8-10)

Secondly, the people of the Fire will curse and insult each other.

Allah says:

(Each time a nation enters, it will curse its sister nation, until,
when they are all gathered together in it,
the last of them will say to the first,
'Our Lord, those are the ones who misguided us,
so give them a double punishment in the Fire.') (7: 36)

And leaders will disown those who followed them in the life of this world, and those who were easily led will say:

('If only we could have another chance,
we would disown them
just as they have disowned us.'
In that way Allah will show them their actions
as a cause of anguish and remorse for them.
They will never emerge from the Fire.) (2: 166)

Thirdly, the people of the Fire will see the *muminun,* whom they used to mock, entering the Garden and avoiding Allah's punishment and anger. Allah says:

(They will say, 'How is it that we do not see some men
whom we used to count among the worst of people?'
Did we turn them into figures of fun?
Did our eyes disdain to look at them?'
All this is certainly true -
the bickering of the people of the Fire.) (38: 61-63)

Fourthly, the people of the Fire will not be permitted to talk to Allah - this will be the worst punishment to be inflicted on them.

Allah says:

(He will say, 'Slink away into it
and do not speak to Me.') (23: 109)

Ibn 'Umar related that the Prophet said, "When the people of the Garden have entered the Garden and the people of the Fire have entered the Fire, Death will be brought forward and placed between the Fire and the Garden - and then it will be made to die and it will be announced: 'O people of the Garden, no more death! O people of the Fire, no more death!' So the people of the Garden will have joy added to the joy they already have, and the people of the Fire will have sorrow added to the sorrow they already have."[79]

Ibn 'Umar related that the Prophet said, "The people of the Garden will enter the Garden, and the people of the Fire will enter the Fire - and then a caller will arise and announce to them, 'O people of the Fire! There will be no death any more! O people of the Garden! There will

[79] Al-Bukhari, 11/415; Muslim, 17/186.

be no death any more - only Eternity.'"

Paradise and its Rewards

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "There will be a caller (in Paradise) who will announce: 'Truly! You will always have good health and never fall ill; you will live for ever and never die; you will always be young and never grow old; and you will always be rich and never grow poor; for the words of Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, are:

> ***(It will be proclaimed to them:***
> ***'This is your Garden***
> ***which you have inherited for what you did.') (7: 42)*** [80]

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "Allah has said, 'I have prepared for My righteous slaves things which have never been seen by any eye, nor heard by any ear, nor imagined by any human being.' If you wish, you can recite this verse from the Noble *Qur'an:*

> ***(No self knows the delight that is hidden away for it***
> ***in recompense for what it used to do.") (32: 17)*** [81]

Ibn Abbas said, "There is nothing in the life of this world which is exactly the same as what is in Paradise - except the names - but honey in this life is not like the honey of Paradise, the wine is not same, and the grapes here are not the same as grapes there."

No matter how much we read about the grace, well being and abundance of the Garden we cannot imagine how wonderful and marvellous it is. Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "There is a tree in Paradise in whose shade a rider can travel for a hundred years. If you wish, you can recite, ***(and wide-spreading shade)*** (56: 32). And even a place in Paradise as small as a bow is better than everything on which the sun rises and sets." [82]

The Gates of Paradise

Sahl Ibn Sad related that the Prophet said, "Paradise has eight gates, one of which is called *Ar-Rayyan*, through which none will enter except those who used to fast." [83]

Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet said, "Whoever gives two kinds of *sadaqa* in the Way of Allah will be summoned from all of the gates of Paradise — and Paradise has eight gates. Whoever is from amongst the people who used to do the prayer will be summoned from the Gate of Prayer; and whoever is from amongst the people who used to fight *jihad* will be summoned from the Gate of Jihad; and whoever is from amongst those who used to fast will be summoned from the Gate of Fasting; and whoever is from amongst those who used to give *sadaqa*, will be summoned from the Gate of Sadaqa." Abu Bakr said, "Whoever is summoned from any of these gates will not feel any distress or need. Will there be anyone who will be summoned from all of these gates?" The Prophet replied, "Yes, and I hope you will be one of them."[84]

The Ranks of Paradise

It is related in the *Sahihain* that the Prophet said, "Paradise has one hundred degrees and the distance between each degree is like the distance between the heavens and the earth." In another *sahih hadith* it is related that he said: "Paradise has one hundred degrees which Allah has reserved for the *mujahidin* who used to fight in His Way, and the distance between each

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[80] Muslim, 17 / 175; At-Tirmidhi, 12/124-125.
[81] Al-Bukhari, 6/318; Muslim, 17/166; Ibn Majah, 4328.
[82] Al-Bukhari, 6/320; Muslim, 13/26; At-Tirmidhi, 7/ 155.
[83] Al-Bukhari, 6/328; Muslim, 8/32.
[84] Al-Bukhari, 7/ 19; Muslim, 7/115-116; Malik, 2 / 469; An-Nasa'i', 6/22-23.

degree is the same as the distance between the heavens and the earth." [85]

So there are degrees in Paradise and the highest degree belongs to our beloved Prophet He said in a *sahih hadith*, "So if you ask Allah for anything ask Him for *Firdous,* for it is the highest part of the Garden and the most exalted part of the Garden and above it is the Throne of the Merciful from which the rivers of the Garden gush forth."[86]

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri related that the Prophet said, "The people of the Garden will gaze at those who dwell in its lofty mansions in the same way as you look at a brilliant star on the far horizon in the east or west — and all of this will be because of their excellence over each other."[87]

The Dwellings in Paradise

Allah says:

> ***(But those who have taqwa of their Lord***
> ***will have high-ceilinged Halls***
> ***and more such Halls built one above the other,***
> ***and rivers flowing under them.***
> ***That is Allah's promise.***
> ***Allah does not break His promise.) (39: 19)***

So Allah has told us that there certainly are lofty mansions in the Garden, one above another.

Abu Musa' al-Ash'ari related that the Prophet said, "A dwelling (in the Garden) is like a hollow pearl which is sixty miles high and in every corner of the dwelling the believer will have a family which cannot be seen by the others." [88]

Abdullah ibn Qais related that the Prophet said, "In the Garden there is a Hall made of a single hollow pearl sixty miles wide, in each corner of which there are wives who will not see those in the other corners — and the believer will visit all of them and enjoy their company. And there are two gardens whose utensils and contents are made of silver, and two other gardens whose utensils and contents are made of such-and-such (gold). And nothing will prevent the people who dwell in the Garden of Eden from seeing their Lord except the Veil of Majesty over His Face."[89]

It has been related by Abu Hurairah and A'isha "Jibril came to the Prophet and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Khadija is just coming with a bowl of soup (or food or drink) for you. When she comes to you, give her greetings of peace from her Lord and from me, and give her the good news of a palace of jewels in the Garden, where there will be neither any noise nor any tiredness."[90]

It has been related by Anas that the Prophet said, "I dreamt that I entered the Garden and in front of me was a palace of gold. I asked, 'Whose palace is this?' They (the angels) replied, 'It is for a man of the Quraysh.' I thought it might be me, so I asked, 'Who is he?' The angels replied, 'It is Umar ibn al-Khattab.'"[91]

The Food of the People of Paradise

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[85] Al-Bukhari, 6/ 11; Muslim, 13 / 28; At-Tirmidhi, 10 / 8; Ibn Majah, 4331.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Al-Bukhari, 11 /416; Muslim, 17/169; At-Tirmidhi, 10 / 21.
[88] Al-Bukhari, 6/318; Muslim, 17/175; At-Tirmidhi, 10/ 6.
[89] Transmitted by al-Bukhari and Muslim.
[90] Al-Bukhari, 7/133; Muslim, 15/199.
[91] Al-Bukhari, 6/318; Muslim, 15/163.

Allah says:

(And any fruit they specify
and any bird-meat they desire.) (56: 23-24)

As for the fruits of Paradise, Allah says:

(When they are given fruit there as provision,
they will say, 'This is what we were given before.'
But they were only given a simulation of it.) (56: 23-24)

In another verse, Allah says:

(Its shading branches will droop down over them,
its ripe fruit hanging ready to be picked.) (76: 14)

It has been related by Anas Ibn Malik, "When the Messenger of Allah was asked what *Al-Kawthar* is, he replied, 'It is a river (in the Garden) which Allah has given me, whiter than milk and sweeter than honey, with birds whose necks are like the necks of sacrificial camels.' Umar remarked, 'They must have a pleasant life,' and the Messenger of Allah replied, 'Those who eat them have an even more pleasant life.'"[92]

It has been related by Jabir that the Prophet said, "The people of the Garden eat and drink but do not have to spit, or pass water, or defecate, or deal with catarrh. Someone asked, 'Then what happens to the food?' and he replied, 'They just burp and perspire — and their perspiration smells like musk and they glorify and praise Allah as easily as you breathe.'"[93]

Thawban , the freed slave of the Messenger of Allah said, "While I was standing next to the Messenger of Allah one of the rabbis of the Jews came and started asking the Prophet some questions. Among them was, 'Who will be the first people to cross the Sirat (on the Day of Rising)?' He replied, 'They will be the poor from amongst the refugees.' The Jew asked, 'What will be their first meal when they enter the Garden?' He replied, 'A fillet of fish-liver.' He asked, 'What will they have to eat after this?' He answered, 'A bullock which has grazed in different parts of the Garden will be slaughtered for them.' He asked, 'What will they have to drink?' He replied, 'They will be given a drink from the fountain called *Salsabil."* The Jew said, 'You have spoken the truth — you are indeed a Messenger.'"[94]

The Drink of the People of Paradise

Allah says:

(The truly good will drink from a cup
mixed with the coolness of camphor,
a spring from which Allah's slaves will drink,
making it gush forth at will abundantly.) (76:5-6)

Allah also says:

(They will be given there a cup to drink
mixed with the warmth of ginger.
In it there is a flowing spring called Salsabil.) (76:17-18)

And He says:

(And their Lord will give them a pure draught to drink.) (76: 21)

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[92] At-Tirmidhi, 10/12, who classified it as *hasan ghareeb;* Albani classified it as *hasan sahih.*
[93] Muslim, 17/174.
[94] Muslim, 3/ 226-227; Al-Baghawi, 15/ 224.

The Garments of the People of Paradise

Allah says:

> ***(They will enter Gardens of Eden***
> ***where they will be adorned with gold bracelets and pearls,***
> ***and where their clothing will be of silk.) (35: 33)***

He also says:

> ***(They will have Gardens of Eden***
> ***with rivers flowing under them.***
> ***They will be adorned in them with bracelets made of gold***
> ***and wear green garments made of the finest silk***
> ***and rich brocade,***
> ***reclining there on couches under canopies.***
> ***What an excellent reward! What a wonderful repose!) (18: 31)***

Al-Bara' Ibn Azib related, "The Prophet was given a silk garment as a gift and we started touching it with our hands and admiring it. At that the Prophet said, 'Are you impressed with this?' We said, 'Yes.' He said, 'The handkerchiefs of Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh in Paradise are better than this.'"[95]

It has been related by Abu Hurairah that the Prophet said, "Believers will be adorned as far as the places where their *wudu* reached."[96]

It has been related by Abu Hurairah that the Prophet said, "Whoever enters the bliss of the Garden will never be destitute, and their garments will never wear out, and they will never lose their youth."[97]

The Attributes of the People of Paradise

It has been related by Mu'adh Ibn Jabal that the Prophet said, "The people of Paradise will be in the Garden without hair, without beards and with their eyes anointed with *kohl*, aged thirty-three years."[98]

It has been related by Abu Hurairah that the Prophet said, "The first group of people to enter Paradise will shine like the full moon and those who follow them will glitter like the most brilliant star in the sky. They will not have to pass water, answer the call nature, spit, or blow their noses. Their combs will be made of gold and their perspiration will smell like musk. Aloes-wood will be used in their dwellings. Their wives will be *houris.* All of them will look alike and they will resemble their father Adam (in stature), sixty cubits tall."[99]

As for their inward state and disposition, Allah says:

> ***(We will strip away any rancour in their hearts —***
> ***brothers, resting on couches face-to-face.) (15: 47)***

It has been related by Abu Hurairah that the Prophet said, "They (the people of the Garden) will not have any disagreements or rancour between them. Their hearts will be like one heart and they will glorify Allah in the morning and in the evening."[100]

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[95] Al-Bukhari, 6/319.
[96] Muslim, 3 / 140; An-Nasa'i', 1/93.
[97] Muslim, 17/174.
[98] At-Tirmidhi, 10/14, who classified it as *hasan gharib.*
[99] Al-Bukhari, 6/319; Muslim, 17/172-173.
[100] Al-Bukhari, 6/138; Muslim, 17/173.

The Lowest and Highest Degrees of the People of Paradise

It has been related by Al-Mughirah Ibn Shu'bah that the Prophet said, "Moses asked his Lord, 'Who amongst the people of the Garden will be the lowest in rank?' He it replied, 'It will be the last person to be allowed into the Garden from amongst those who deserve to enter it. I will say to him, "Enter the Garden." He will reply, "Omy Lord! how can I, when all its people have already settled in their dwellings and have been given what is due to them?"'

"It will be said to him, 'Will you be content if you have a kingdom the size of one of one of the kings of the world?' He will reply, 'I will be content, my Lord.' He will say, 'This is for you, and this, and this, and this, and this.' After the fifth time he will say, 'I am very content, my Lord.' He will say, 'It is all for you and ten times more again like it — and for you is what your self desires and your eye enjoys.' He will say, 'I am very content, my Lord.'

"He (Moses) then asked, 'Who will be the highest in rank?' He (Allah) replied, 'Whomever I have chosen — I have established their honour with My own Hand and set a seal on it with what no eye has seen, nor ear has heard, nor mind imagined.' This is confirmed by the Book of Allah, the Exalted, the Great:

(No self knows the delight that is hidden away for it
in recompense for what it used to do.") (32: 17) [101]

The *Houris* of Paradise

Allah it says:

(They will have there spouses of perfect purity
and will remain there timelessly, for ever.) (2: 24)

He also says:

(We will marry them to dark-eyed maidens.) (44: 51)

It has been related by Anas Ibn Malik that the Prophet said, "A morning's journey or an afternoon's journey in the Way of Allah is better than the whole world and everything in it; and a place which is a bow's shot of any one of you — or even just a foot step — into the Garden is better than the whole world and everything in it; and if one of the *houris* of the Garden were to look at the earth, she would fill the whole space between them with light, and she would fill what is between them with perfume — and even the veil over her face is better than the whole world and everything in it."[102]

It has been related by Abu Hurairah that the Prophet said, "The first group to enter the Garden will shine like the full moon, and the next group will glitter like the most brilliant star in the sky. Their hearts will be as if they are the heart of a single person, for they will have neither enmity nor jealousy between them. Every man will have two of the *houris* as wives — and the marrow of the bones in their legs will be visible through their flesh and bones."[103]

The Vision of Allah

Allah says:

(Faces that Day will be radiant,
gazing at their Lord.)   (75: 21-22)

He also says:

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[101] Al-Bukhari, 11 /419; Muslim, 2/45-46.
[102] Al-Bukhari, 6 / 15; At-Tirmidhi, 8/155.
[103] Al-Bukhari, 6/319; Muslim, 17/ 172-173.

(Those who do good will have the best and more!) (10: 26)

It has been related by Abu Hurairah that some (Companions of the Prophet) asked, "O Messenger of Allah! Will we see our Lord on the Day of Judgment?" He replied, "Do you have any difficulty in seeing the sun at noon when it is not clouded over?" They said, "No." Then he said, "Do you have any difficulty in seeing the full moon on the fourteenth night when it is not clouded over?" They said, "No." Then he said, "By Allah Who is the One in Whose Hand my life is, you will have no more difficulty in seeing your Lord than you have in seeing either of them.[104]

It has been related by Suhaib Ibn Sinan ar-Rumi that the Prophet recited the *ayah* of Allah, ***(Those who do good will have the best and more!)*** (10: 26) and said, "When those who deserve the Garden have entered the Garden and those who deserve the Fire have entered the Fire, Allah the Blessed and Exalted will ask, 'Would you like Me to give you anything more?' They will reply: 'Have You not illuminated our faces? Have You not brought us into the Garden and saved us from the Fire?'" He continued, "Then He will remove the Veil - and of everything given to them nothing will be dearer to them than the vision of their Lord, the Mighty and Glorious."[105]

This indeed is the highest reward - and all other rewards are nothing compared to the moment when the people of the Garden enjoy the vision of their Lord. They will experience the greatest bliss when they meet their Lord.

All praise is for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. Yours is the Glory, our Lord, and to You all praise belongs. I bear witness that there is no god but You, and that Muhammad is Your slave and Your Messenger and I seek Your forgiveness and I turn in repentance to You.

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[104] Muslim, 41 / 7078.

[105] Muslim, 3/17.

CONCLUSION

See the *dunya,* this world, as it really is. Do not be taken in by its deceptive attractiveness and its illusory beauty. Understand the reality and nature of existence.

Allah describes the *dunya* like this:

> ***(The metaphor of the life of the dunya***
> ***is that of water which We send down from the sky,***
> ***and which then mingles with the plants of the earth***
> ***to provide food for both people and animals.***
> ***Then, when the earth is at its loveliest***
> ***and takes on its fairest guise***
> ***and its people think they have it under their control,***
> ***Our command comes upon it by night or day***
> ***and We reduce it to dried-out stubble,***
> ***as though it had not been flourishing just the day before!***
> ***In this way We make Our Signs clear for people who reflect.) (10: 24)***

In another verse, Allah says:

> ***(Make a metaphor for them of the life of the dunya.***
> ***It is like water which We send down from the sky***
> ***and the plants of the earth combine with it***
> ***but then become dry chaff scattered by the winds.***
> ***Allah has absolute power over everything.) (18: 44)***

The life of this world is bound to end, no matter how long it lasts. It is only a few breathes in a few places, limited to a certain time span — nobody will live for ever.

It has been related by 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar, "The Messenger of Allah took hold of my shoulder and said, 'Be in this world as if you are a stranger or a traveller.'" The narrator added, "Ibn 'Umar used to say, 'If you survive until the evening, do not expect to be alive in the morning, and if you survive until the morning, do not expect to be alive in the evening, and take from your health for your sickness, and take from your life for your death.'"[106]

The Messenger of Allah slept on a reed mat and sat up with its marks on his body, so Ibn Mas'ud said, "O Messenger of Allah, I wish you would tell us to spread something out for you to make it comfortable for you." He replied, "What have Ito do with this world? As far as this world is concerned I am like a rider who shades himself under a tree for a while and then goes off and leaves it."[107]

Jesus used to warn his followers saying, "Treat this world like a bridge and do not settle down in it." He also said, "Who can build a house on the surface of the waves of the sea? This world is like that, so do not consider it a permanent residence."[108]

So we should live in this world like strangers or travellers. No matter how much wealth or treasure we accumulate in it and no matter how long we indulge in its pleasures and attractions, it will eventually come to an end. Allah says:

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[106] Al-Bukhari, 6416; Al-Bayhaqi, 3 / 369; Ibn al-Mubarak in *Az-Zuhd,* 13; Al-Baghawi, 4029; Al-Qudha'i in *Musnad ash-Shihab,* 644; Ibn Hibban, 298.
[107] Ahmed, 1 / 391; At-Tirmidhi, 2377, who classified it as *hasan sahih;* and Ibn Majah.
[108] Ahmed in *Az-Zuhd,* p. 93.

(Know that the life of the dunya is merely a game and a diversion
and ostentation and a cause of boasting among yourselves
and trying to outdo one another in wealth and children:
like the plant-growth after rain which delights the cultivators,
but then it withers and you see it turning yellow,
and then it becomes broken stubble.) (57: 19)

So the enjoyment and pleasures of this world are only illusory and deceptive and its beauty is ephemeral and unreal. Allah says:

(The life of the dunya is just the enjoyment of delusion.) (3: 185)

The enjoyment of this world, compared to that of the next world, is short — and life is passing, so the first thing for a righteous person to do is to be liberated from being preoccupied by it. Allah says:

(Say, "The enjoyment of the dunya is very brief.
The akhira is better for those who have taqwa.) (4: 76)

And:

(Are you happier with the dunya than the akhira?
Yet the enjoyment of the dunya is very small
compared to that of the akhira.) (9: 38)

And:

(They rejoice in the life of the dunya.
Yet the life of the dunya,
compared to the akhira,
is only fleeting enjoyment.) (13: 27)

So Allah it warns His slaves against its trials and temptations and He *it* says:

(So do not let the life of the dunya delude you
and do not let the Deluder delude you concerning Allah.) (31:32)

The Deluder is Shaytan. He tries to make us forget that time is fleeting and to delude us by suggesting that the Reckoning will not come — whereas it is certain to come, because Allah's promise is true. We must not play with time, nor be deceived by appearances. That Day may come today or tomorrow or when we least expect it.

Allah reminds His servants about His true promise — which we have a tendency to turn away from and ignore, because of the world's pleasures and temptations. The seductive attractiveness of this world may deceive us into forgetting the next world. He says:

(Mankind! Allah's promise is true.
Do not let not the life of the dunya delude you
and do not let the Deluder delude you about Allah.) (35: 5)

So a wise man does not prefer the life of this world to that of the next world. Allah says:

(Yet still you prefer the life of the dunya
when the akhira is better and longer lasting.) (87: 16-17)

You should know that the best of the life of this world cannot really be attained unless you strive hard for the best of the life of the next world. Allah says:

(Anyone who acts rightly,
male or female,

being a mumin,
We will give them a good life
and We will recompense them
according to the best of what they did.) (16: 97)

All of us are strangers in a temporary abode which is completely unlike the abode of the next world — which is for ever, so strive hard to be one of the people of the eternal abode.

When Adam was created, he was ordered to dwell with his wife in Paradise — and then they were expelled from it — and then they were promised a return to it, together with their righteous descendants. This is why true believers always yearn to return to their original homeland which is Paradise. Love for your homeland is a sign of your belief.

The gates of the Garden are open wide, and each gate calls on you to follow a path of good action and righteousness so that you may enter through that gate.

Abu Hurairah related that the Messenger of Allah said, "Whoever hands over two of any kind of property in the Way of Allah is called to the Garden with the words, 'O slave of Allah! This is good!' Whoever is from among the people of *salat* is called from the Gate of *Salat.* Whoever is from among the people of *jihad* is called from the Gate of *Jihad.* Whoever is from among the people of *sadaqa* is called from the Gate of *Sadaqa.* Whoever is from among the people of fasting is called from the Gate of the Well-Watered *(Bab arRayyan)."* Abu Bakr as-Siddiq said, "O Messenger of Allah! Is it necessary that someone be called from only one of these gates? Can anyone be called from all of these gates?" He said, "Yes, and I hope you are from among them."[109]

One day *Imam* Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya went to visit his teacher, *Imam* Ibn Taymiyya, in prison, may Allah have mercy on them. Seeing the exhaustion on his teacher's face, he felt deeply touched by his condition and broke into tears. Ibn Taymiyya said to him, "O Ibn al-Qayyim, do not weep. The real prisoner is the one whose heart has restrained him from the remembrance of Allah and the real captive is the one whose desires have prevented him from obeying Allah. O Ibn al-Qayyim, how can my enemies harm me? If they imprison me, this is my *khalwa;* if they send me into exile, this will be my journey to fight *jihad* in the Way of Allah; and if they kill me, I will have died in the Way of Allah."

Imam Ali said: "Do no lean towards the *dunya* and what is in it — because this world will definitely come to an end. Aim for the *akhira,* whose guardian is Ridwan, and where Ahmad will be your neighbour — and which Allah has created to last for ever."

We ask Allah to include us among the people of Paradise and to bless our beloved Prophet Muhammad and grant him peace.

Amin

Shaykh Muhammad Mustafa Abu Ithar

[109] Ahmed, AI-Bukhari, Muslim, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasa'i' and see also *Sahih al-Ja'mi',* 2028.

COUNSEL ON DEATH

Prepare yourself for death, O my brother, for it will descend.
Do not draw out your hopes
in case your heart treats you harshly.

Persevere in reflection which will make you aware
and move you to do good works, for life will soon depart.

Constantly reflect on the states of the Last Hour, the Rising,
the Gathering, and the Balance of actions which is set up.

Then there is the Bridge which will have obstacles laid out on it
to make the crossing difficult for the rebellious.

While whoever was obedient and sincere towards Allah
will pass over it like a flash of lightning or a wind
and will go on.

If you wish to be given a drink from the Fountain
on the Day of Gathering,
you must love the Prophet and his descendants.

And bless the Guide who intercedes for mankind. He is the one
who will plead for us when creation is terrified.

May the blessings of Allah be upon him in every land,
and on his family and Companions and those who love him.

I ask the Lord, Allah, for the gift of true happiness
and a seal of goodness for me and those who draw near.

(From the *Diwan* of Shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Habib)